

THE MESSIAH OF ISMIR

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GIFT OF
T. V. SMITH

- (1) Jews economically, politically, spiritually weak
- (2) turned inward - to mysticism
- (3) "lost" in economy
- (4) Englishness, modern & Christian influence
- (5) 19th minorities - Jews suffered in Europe
- (6) right eye, right ear

spirit of age - contemporary events
 (among Jews & Christians)
 (in Europe)

p. 36 not religious, intelligence,
 but heart



THE MESSIAH
OF ISMIR



Wware afbeeldinge van Sabetha Sebi den genaemden
hersteller des Joodfchen Rycks.

Vray pourtrait de Sabbathai Sevi qui se dit Restaurateur
du Roÿaume de Juda & Israel

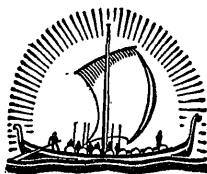
THE MESSIAH OF ISMIR

SABBATAI ZEVI



BY JOSEPH KASTEIN, *psued.*

Katzenstein, Julius, 1890-



TRANSLATED BY HUNTLEY PATERSON

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SABBATAI ZEVI

Der Messias Von Ismir

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THE MESSIAH
OF ISMIR

DEDICATED TO MARTIN BUBER

LEADER OF MEN

CHAPTER I

The Spirit of the Age

EARLY in the seventeenth century there lived in Ismir, the modern Smyrna, a certain Jew named Mordecai Zevi. He came of a Byzantine family from Morea and earned a frugal but honest livelihood by keeping a small poulterer's shop, on the proceeds of which he supported his wife and three sons, Elijah, Joseph, and Sabbatai. The latter is the hero of this narrative, and, to understand his personality and how it came about that a people scattered over the face of the earth accepted him as their leader and saviour, a clear conception must be formed of the Age and the place the Jews occupied in it. The *Galuth*, or Diaspora, had been completed, and the great wandering movement inaugurated after the destruction of the second Temple had been brought to a close, the last great dispersal of a Jewish colony, the banishment of the Jews from Spain, having taken place a hundred years previously. A new centre was already forming in the East. Poland and the Ukraine had received the flood of returning fugitives, who in search of food and a means of livelihood had wandered as far as Siberia.

This wandering movement had been forced upon them to procure the barest necessities of life; they could secure breathing-space only by cajoling it from their environ-

ment. Thus their chance of settling down was always limited to spheres where economic conditions presented the least resistance, and they could hope to flourish only where they found an opportunity of supplying a need in the economic system. They were urged on, therefore, by economic forces alone, and the intellectual or spiritual plane of the environment they eventually chose did not concern them.

It was a precarious existence, but at least it was an existence. At times they actually grew rich, but their wealth was always insecure. They had no haven, no retreat to which they could betake themselves to enjoy their possessions in peace and safety. Everywhere they were strangers in a strange land, unable to found rich families or produce an aristocracy of wealth. They raised funds for their poorer brethren, who were still wandering to and fro, and sent money to Jerusalem where many of their destitute co-religionists were living, and they paid the landlords and authorities heavily for allowing them to settle down and work, to practise their religious observances, and even to travel on business and to wear beards. While they trafficked only in goods in which the whole world was free to deal, they themselves became objects of barter for all and sundry. Emperors sold them to princes, together with the money value they represented, and princes assigned them to certain towns. They had become valuable chattels.

Frequently they were transported, just as merchandise is transported, as, for instance, when a ruler, a country, or a town required money. In such cases their goods were confiscated and they were driven out and allowed to re-

turn only on payment of huge bribes. Those who know not whether they will possess anything on the morrow are naturally less scrupulous about the methods they adopt, and lay hands on all they can while they have the chance, for at any moment they may be held up to ransom. But in the world about them this made for unpopularity which, in its turn, again led to their being attacked, driven out, and forced once more to take undue thought for the morrow. Thus the vicious circle of exploitation and oppression was formed.

But there were periods when their wealth enabled them to lead a comfortable existence. For instance, in Germany during the Thirty Years War their help was urgently needed to fill the coffers of war and they were placed under special protection. But there was one lesson which through all the vicissitudes of fate they learnt to take to heart, and that was that possessions are at once all and nothing. They were necessary for life but did not guarantee life. Everything was fleeting and temporary. *Their possessions had no home or habitation.*

Besides making social outcasts of them, their wanderings led them, except in Spain, into spheres where they had no spiritual foothold. They heard a language spoken, songs sung, tales told, saw festivals celebrated and pleasures experienced, which were not their own. They were no longer the fruit of intellectual growth but had, as it were, gone to seed; the intellectual controversies of their Age had nothing to do with their own problems; the bloody wars about them were not fought for ideals they held sacred; while for anything which as living souls they had to say regarding matters transcending the daily

round, the common task, they found none that had ears to hear, none in whose breast they could raise an echo. Thus both the good and the evil of their perilous lives had to be confined within the four walls of their houses. *Their spirit had no habitation.*

Even more than economic and intellectual conditions did the nature of their faith isolate them in the lands they inhabited. And in this matter it was they themselves who sought isolation. But, strange to say, the world about them demanded that they should abandon their faith, and it was Spain, where once they had met with the greatest tolerance, which in this respect brought the cruellest pressure to bear upon them. Thus as the price of its friendship the world called upon the Jews to renounce an old, a much older faith than it professed itself; and when, in due course, the new faith was split up into many different forms, the Jews were confronted by the demands of four mutually hostile bodies—the Mohammedans, the Catholics, the Greek Church, and the Protestants. Those who have once created a religion from the depths of their own souls, and breathed life into it, naturally have a sense of possession which resists all attempts at conversion. But unfortunately at this time there was literally no place in the world where the forms and influence of their faith and its powers of resistance and inspiration could take root. Religion is the flower of a higher form of life upon a certain soil and in a certain community; deprived of these it becomes merely a tradition cut off from its roots. *Their faith had no home.* ✓

In a world which seemed to be boundless, because it possessed none of those means of communication which

shorten distances, every remote place bore the stigma of a foreign land. The Moor from the East and the Jew from every quarter of the globe were objects of wonder, and when wonder is coupled with ignorance of habits and customs it engenders an attitude of haughty disapproval and a sense of superiority. But when these strange beings expose themselves to the public gaze not only on rare occasions, at some annual fair, but year in year out as fellow-citizens and neighbours, they inspire hostility not unmingled with a certain secret fear. Thus the Jews came to be regarded as lepers, who bore the stigma of their isolation about with them. *Their nationality had no home.*

A people without a home!

But men must have a home. No man can live without a home or habitation, and if the world denies him this he creates a home in his own heart. If the reality is taken from him, he clutches at the shadow. And provided that the will to live has not been broken there remains one last refuge on which he can build—his inner shrine.

The Jews succeeded in this rare achievement, and this gave them a unique position in history which can be understood only on its merits, since there are no analogous cases to help.

It was upon this inner shrine that they heaped everything their Age denied them, that is to say, all their ancestral achievements and aspirations, the history of their ancient tribes with their destinies, hopes, and beliefs from time immemorial, right back to the spiritual circle in which they had developed and collapsed. Thus their inner shrine was full to the brim with records and

memories. They lived in the present by means of the past.

- This had a twofold result, which is of the utmost importance for the understanding of this narrative. Those things which served them as memories could no longer be the sport of chance and change; they were recorded in sacred and imperishable form in the books of the Bible, in the Thora, the Prophets, and the Writings. They were amplified and enriched by the Talmud, that grand attempt to harmonize the ever-changing present with the meaning and content of the Bible. These constituted their philosophic works, their judicial codes, their fairy tales, their reading primers, their legends, myths, folklore, love songs, and historical records. Their children grew up steeped in the atmosphere of events that had happened thousands of years ago. They might know the face, the bright armour, and the terrifying halberd of the watchman at the gate of their town, but they knew nothing more about him. Yet of Abraham, their grandsire, they knew everything down to the most intimate detail of his life. They were interested in the political conditions of their Age and concerned about them only in so far as they affected their own lives for the next few days. But the question whether the Children of Israel had done right to substitute kings for judges was a subject of passionate perennial interest. What cared they whether the lord of the manor might be a tyrant if he chose or whether the peasant must be a slave? But homeless as they were, all that concerned them was how much the Jew must leave on the fields as gleanings for the poor. Thus their everyday problems were two thousand years old and set in

their imaginations against the background of the home from which they had been driven. And as they lived amid such traditions, they also lived in the environment which had given them birth. *They had not ceased to live in the Orient.*

But their history did not merely consist of a sequence of events—wars, the rise and fall of kings, and migrations; it was also an interlacing of the spiritual and the material, at once the evolution of a people and the evolution of a religion. They formed the only community in the world which had not developed from climatic and social conditions alone, but was also called upon to be the bearer of a religious idea. Long before they had settled down they had been promised a land of their own where they could fulfil their mission; before they had become a united nation capable of development, they had been told that they would never die out, and before they had proved themselves worthy of their religious mission, they had been assured that one day their faith would be spread over the whole world. Thus they reached maturity buoyed up by countless promises, and lived, and time and again failed. In the course of their history they failed so often in the mission they had been given that at last they were punished by being scattered over the face of the earth; but as this was intended only to punish and not to exterminate them, they were given a further final promise—that of redemption through a Messiah.

To modern man this seems a far-away mystic idea belonging to another sphere and passing human comprehension. But to the Jews of those days the Messiah was no more strange or distant than the figures in their Bible.

use {

The Messiah, as an essential factor in their living past, belonged to the world of everyday life, and the miracles associated with his appearance they expected as a matter of course, as the ordinary appurtenances of their spiritual existence. *Thus to them the miracle was a factor of everyday life.*

So they lived in their memories, with the result that their past never died. Too long had they been separated and taken away from their source. Yet they had not forgotten it, but carried it about in their hearts like a plant that has no native soil but is expected to flourish in foreign lands. It was something within them striving to grow old and die, but they could not let it die, for they had nothing else wherewith to satisfy the hunger of their souls. Nevertheless, they were unable to convert their memories into reality and return to their native land and start life afresh. Whither then could they go with this treasure which was in danger?

The Rabbis, the spiritual shepherds of this people, found a solution. They appealed to the brains instead of to the hearts of their flock, burying memory beneath endless interpretations, reflections, speculations, and theories. They knew that a heart may tire at a beat but that a brain works on for ever. And quite rightly they saw that the life of Judaism was threatened from the quarter of the heart. So they weaned it from the source from which it had hitherto derived its sustenance—the Bible, and gave it the *Halacha*, the Law. Young men were forbidden to read the Bible until their twentieth year. True there was the Talmud; but only when they reached years of discretion were they allowed to read

this dangerous and holy work which was such a menace to the Jews in dispersion.

But thirsting for support and sustenance for the secret longings of their hearts, the people were opposed to this, and from the *Halacha* they turned to the *Haggada*, or legends, and the hidden crisis of Judaism at this time consists of the silent war between *Halacha* and *Haggada*, between the brain that was armed and the heart that was menaced. A situation of permanent danger was thus created; on the one hand was the threat of ultimate petrification, on the other of collapse into mysticism. The key to the situation was their homelessness.

A great though dangerous attempt on a grand scale was made to wrest a decision from this state of threatened equilibrium—through the works of the *Kabala*. The *Kabala* is at once a mode of thought and a piece of literature. It is both a theory and a cosmogony, a method of life in the present while having as its object the understanding of life in all eternity. It constitutes an attempt to continue the life of a people who had once created a religion, by examining the links connecting life on this earth with the act of creation. It is a mystic interpretation of the universe and concerned with answering the question of how imperfection came to be associated with God's work, and is full of a passionate desire to harmonize the perfection of the creative act with the imperfection of actual life.

The *Kabala* was the production of minds who, setting out to solve the riddle of the universe, were also anxious to find a reason for their unique fate as Jews. God and the world had been parted. A certain country and its people

had been parted. The world could return to God, its home, and the Jews could return to their ancient sanctuary. The pure emanations of God's spirit had become entangled in the impurity of matter; they must be released from this contamination, collected together, and borne up to God. God's people had been dispersed to the four winds, among strange peoples; they must be collected from the ends of the earth and brought back to serve God in their ancestral home.

✓ The world must be saved; a people must be saved—the Messiah cult!

It was not every Jew who was capable of following the difficult and tortuous paths of the Kabala, but every Jew believed in a Messiah. Kbalism gave rise to passionate and heated opposition, and its adversaries and supporters fought each other with unscrupulous malice. But the quarrel was merely concerned with ways and means. The hope and object of both parties was identical—the coming of the Messiah.

With fateful impatience they waited. Like blind fish on the bed of the ocean they had feelers stretched out, which began to quiver at the approach of anything which might feed their hopes. They responded to the magnetism of phenomena. Thus the Jew was endowed with a unique organ which differentiated him from the rest of the world and which, though it may have become atrophied, continues to differentiate him to this day.

Such was the spiritual background against which the following events took place.

CHAPTER II

Early Days

SABBATAI ZEVI was born in July 1626 on the day which in the Jewish calendar corresponds to the ninth of Ab, the day on which the second Temple was destroyed. His father, Mordecai Zevi, the poor poulterer, was of a somewhat weak and ailing constitution and suffered from every kind of illness to the end of his days. But he regarded the existence of his three sons as a blessing which made life easier for him, and, as they grew up, he destined two of them, Joseph and Elijah, to his own trade, which in due course they pursued. The eldest, Sabbatai, he destined for study.

What kind of study? There is no question here of any of the various scientific courses of which we naturally think when we mention study. In this case study meant merely the thorough mastery of the books of the Bible and the Talmud, an achievement which occupied a lifetime and yet was not a profession. Now and again it helped a man to secure a post or to become a Rabbi, in which case he had a modest but not always enviable competency; for even poor communities allowed themselves the luxury of a spiritual guide and could find many candidates for a post uniting moral power with a position which, though poor, was secure.

But for the majority of such students there was no practical employment, and looked at from the social point of view it was a piece of irresponsible extravagance for a poor tradesman to burden himself for life with a child who in all probability would never be able to earn a farthing. In so doing such a man arrogated to himself the privilege of a wealthy merchant or a member of the aristocracy.

But even if such considerations had been brought to Mordecai Zevi's attention, he would have been incapable of understanding them. His thoughts were on a different plane. He was an insignificant little Jew living at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and we must try to forget the three hundred years that separate us from him and his life. We are then confronted with a form of spirituality which to us seems heroic and idealistic, but which to the men of that day appeared perfectly natural and commonplace. It was based on the simple primitive principle of doing what lay nearest and letting the morrow take care of itself. No more and no less! All that remained of strength and energy belonged to that other side of the day—to God.

So Sabbatai Zevi was sent to the *Jeshibah*, the school of which Rabbi Joseph Escapa was the head. Joseph Escapa was a zealous teacher and Sabbatai was a zealous pupil. He was a quiet peculiar child, an earnest little Oriental Jew, who did not find learning very difficult. Indeed, he was extraordinarily quick of understanding, and when once he had learnt a thing he never forgot it. Thus he accumulated a vast mass of knowledge which he mastered as a man only masters what he has known a

long while. But what a man has known a long while he does not hold in the highest respect, and Sabbatai soon began not only to form opinions of his own and to be critical, but also to find fault even with the form in which his knowledge was presented to him—the Hebrew tongue. He loved this language, and felt that in the course of its evolution it had deteriorated and become common and coarse. A passionate little fellow, he was enamoured of the clear and resonant language of the prophets of old, and hoped that people would return to it and hold it in esteem. Indeed, he openly boasted that one day he would revive classical Hebrew in all its purity.

His self-importance raised no smile, for clever Jewish children were treated with great indulgence and respect in his circle. In any case, Sabbatai had extraordinary achievements to his credit, for he had studied and mastered the whole of Talmudic and Rabbinic literature by the time he reached his fifteenth year. Others required a whole lifetime for such a feat. But he had succeeded while he was still on the confines of childhood, and now if he wished to remain true to tradition he would have to go over the same ground again and again, seeking ever fresh subtleties, possibilities, and interpretations, and deciding delicate points of religious lore; only thus could he hope to win a position of authority in the realm of Jewish scholarship.

But this he could not bring himself to do. He did not possess the necessary inner serenity and resignation. The very speed with which he had mastered the traditional curriculum proved that his was a hasty restless temperament, ever eager for new knowledge and experiences. He

seemed to be driven on by some inner force towards an unseen goal, and this made it impossible for him to go back over ground he had once trod. He left that for those who were merely industrious. He was not industrious. He was hungry and inquisitive. His hunger had not been stilled, nor was he satisfied with the knowledge he had so dutifully acquired. He felt as though he were confronted by empty space.

It was not his understanding that rebelled, for where could he have found better intellectual nourishment than that provided by the intricacies of the Talmud, in which a people had stored up all that they had been unable to turn into concrete reality in a land of their own? It was rather his heart that was starved. Or, to be quite accurate, it was not only his heart, but that intermediate realm between brain and feeling, between spirit and instinct, between intellect and emotion, that part of his being which yearned for creative activity and endurance, that craved stimulation.

For this precocious child the Talmud was not sufficient. It introduced him only to an intellectual reality, and of reality Sabbatai knew nothing. Children learn to know and suffer reality at play, and youths when they have been given a calling and are set face to face with life. But Sabbatai had never been allowed to play, much less to engage in any ordinary employment. And since man lives on this earth and is beset by all the myriad phenomena of the universe he must have some sort of reality, even if he has to invent it himself.

Sabbatai found this ready to hand. True, it could not be grasped with the fist, but neither could it be touched

or shaken by the realities of existence, and this alone made it extraordinarily powerful. It was the world of the Kabala, a world full of wonders, containing the history and promised destiny of a people as well as the meaning of creation and of the universe. In it all the secrets of sin and redemption were revealed, though certainly only to him who could read with knowledge and understanding. In it the rigid, logical consistency of Talmudic reasoning was resolved into passionate and quivering perceptions and conclusions fraught with ecstasy.

Thus it constituted, as it were, a new and unknown realm where men could wander less fettered by tradition, constraints, and formalities; it had come into being too recently for such things to have taken root on its soil. True its theoretical and theosophical side, the *Kabala Jiunit*, afforded ample opportunity for the exercise of purely intellectual activities. But it also had its theurgical side, its practical system, the *Kabala Maassit*. Both, however, presented an entirely different world from that found in Talmudic and Rabbinic lore. In studying it there was no need to stand, as it were, hammer in hand before a collection of miscellaneous objects, theories, discoveries, interpretations, and decisions; on the contrary, he who espoused the doctrine of the Kabala was necessarily led to participate as a human being and a personality in all the wonders it contained.

The key-note of the Kabala is the conviction that one day a man will arise to restore order to a world that had lost it—a Messiah. The advent of a Messiah was imperative. For the elemental soul substance, the *Nizuzoth*,

had fallen and decayed and become entangled in the tentacles of elemental evil, because the spirits, the divine elements, the *Sheibirath Hakelim* had fallen. They had to be separated from each other again; in other words, evil had to be annihilated. Then the world would be good once more. Then grace, borne down by the myriad emanations of the Almighty, the *Sefiroth*, would once more pour down upon the earth. Then the world of Order would come into being, the *Olam ha-Tikkun*. The just and the pure in heart could contribute to this end if they could but see the links between the world above and the world below, and carry out the *Kavanot*, the penitential exercises prescribed in the practical Kabala. Every man was capable of doing this, but only the Messiah, the incarnation of primordial man, *Adam Kadmon*, who himself partook of the godhead, could accomplish it with full strength and certainty.

This work, therefore, held out a hope and a mission to every man. The call was to every individual soul that took the trouble to study its teaching. It only rested with him to seek for the key and to bestir himself. It was into this ground that young Sabbatai Zevi shot his roots. The reader will readily understand that he merely skimmed the surface of the system in order as quickly as possible to reach the living and practical part, the part which called upon him as an individual and would enable him to fulfil what he secretly felt to be his mission. No sense of immaturity deterred him from immersing himself in this atmosphere, but the world he discovered was hard and extremely hostile to life. It was full of all kinds of mortifications of the flesh, prayers, fastings,

penitential exercises, ablutions, and observances demanding monastic abstinence and calculated to numb the senses. But in return a man acquired extraordinary clarity of vision and a heightened sensitiveness towards the transcendental and the supernatural. He was enabled to draw into close and visible proximity to God and the angels, to foretell the course of events on earth, and perform acts which simpler men were forced to regard as miracles.

This discipline thus promised to bring about an extraordinary enhancement of personality, and the further he penetrated into this new kingdom, the more convinced was Sabbatai that this was so. Young and immature though he was, he soon won the reputation of being a great and learned Kabbalist. People came to him anxious to benefit from his knowledge and ready to accept his teaching, which for a man of his tender years constituted something of a triumph and gave him an extraordinary sense of his own importance and value. It made him feel that he was a person of some consequence who stood apart from the rest of mankind, superior to those of his own age and generation. He was at this time just eighteen and the Rabbis of his town had already conferred upon him the honourable title of *Chacham*, or *Wise Man*.


From time immemorial men have been wont to gather about the scholar to learn from him, subordinating their minds to his and making their master's thoughts their own. Thus when Sabbatai became a Chacham it was also imperative for him to have a band of disciples who acknowledged themselves his intellectual dependants. But the old or mature men, who came to him to ask a

question or to have a mystery solved, were no good for this purpose, because they always turned away respectfully wagging their heads and thanking him. He had no use for those who made off when once they had been answered. His disciples must be men who would remain with him and by their constant presence proclaim to the whole world that he was the young Chacham, a wonderful and extraordinary man. Thus he looked about for young men who, like himself, were filled with curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, believers, fanatics, and enthusiasts, of whom, indeed, there were plenty to be found. He merely had to select them, draw them to him and cunningly convey to them that he, the Chacham Sabbatai Zevi would lead them along thrilling, mysterious, and wonderful paths. He knew that he was endowed with such an abundance of spiritual riches that he had enough for hundreds of followers.

Thus from among those who worked with him and came to him with their questions, he selected a special body whose leader and teacher he became. In selecting them he was not concerned with friendship, though knowledge and youth are all that a man needs for such a relationship. Never did he become the friend of any man. Throughout his life he regarded all men as belonging to only two classes—supporters or adversaries. This was particularly so during the period we are discussing when he was longing to unburden himself of his superfluous riches and when all he demanded of the young men about him was that they should stand before him and receive what he had to offer. He was searching not for men but for disciples; for in making them intellectually

dependent on him he was gratifying his youthful longing for personal adherents. They were to take the place of those things by means of which other children reached self-consciousness—the games in which they played the leader. But he turned this craving into a vocation.

In the exercise of his calling he was extremely autocratic though sincere. He expected his disciples to perform exceptionally difficult penitential exercises and mortifications of the flesh, and he was the first to set them a high example. Sometimes he fasted for a whole week. He carried out ablutions on the beach in every season of the year and in any weather. He frequently withdrew from them for hours at a time to engage in prayer and they would hear him singing the Messianic hymn of *Israel Nadshara* in his extraordinarily beautiful voice. His voice possessed a charm which he exploited to gain influence, frequently turning its sensuous appeal to account to win adherents. It was not his intellect alone that gave him power over others, but a certain magnetism which emanated from his whole personality and increased with the years. As a man who felt constantly spurred on to influence and master others, he was no doubt fully aware of the impression created by his external appearance, and both friend and foe are agreed that he was extremely handsome. Slim and well proportioned, he had dark deep-set eyes, a full sensuous mouth and a graceful carriage, while all reports agree that a strange and fragrant aroma emanated from his body. On returning from his penitential exercises "his face used to shine like that of some unearthly being" and the primitive engravings and drawings of his day depict



him with exceptionally large and vivacious eyes and mouth.

Again and again we are told that his person and appearance were that of the "dreamer," but such a description merely conceals a reluctance accurately to describe his behaviour and the spirit that guided his actions. True, he may have been a romantic young man, but his actions were sensible, sane, and full of significance. When he was not alone or engaged in penitential exercises, he would go every night, surrounded by his disciples, outside the city gates, following the example of the great foreign Kabbalist, Chaim Vital Calabrese of Safed. Beneath the starlit heavens outside the city he would probe the great mysteries, weighing them word by word, thought by thought, and sentiment by sentiment. This was not gushing enthusiasm, it was the exercise of a propensity which from time immemorial had been the possession of his people. Even when they were wandering in the wilderness the Jews had been able to detach themselves from everyday life and in front of their tents on the boundless plain retire into that solitude where every event becomes converted into a spiritual experience. This was merely their peculiar way of expressing and living their kinship with Nature, their acceptance of Being through the reverent recognition of the spirit, just as when he gathers the fruit from the soil or from the trees a Jew will always show his humility before Nature's handiwork by saying grace. All Sabbatai did was to worship God in the open, a simple proceeding which he did not allow the mockery of the unsympathetic Turks to interrupt. He knew the importance of what he was doing, and if he had not felt

it himself, the recognition of his followers could not have failed to prove it to him. His father above all was loud in his approval, constantly declaring that all his son did was pleasing in God's eyes and maintaining that God had obviously rewarded him for having devoted one of his children to the study of holy things. And this happened as follows.

About this time there were violent upheavals in Turkey owing to constant changes of government and of rulers. As soon as Sultan Ibrahim came into power, one of his first actions was to declare war on the great Republic of Venice. Hitherto Constantinople and Salonica had been the two commercial centres of Turkey. But the war cut off the usual trade routes and the majority of the English, French, Dutch, and Italian merchants, refusing to have their business disturbed by the feud between the Sultan and Venice, without further ado shifted their commercial headquarters to Ismir.

This immediately led to vast changes in the status and appearance of that city, and for the Jews in particular it introduced a new era. Hitherto very few Jews had settled there and they were not much better off than the poor poulterer Mordecai Zevi. But now the whole trade of the Levant became concentrated in Ismir, creating a great demand for labour. Three or four times a year the great caravans came from India, Persia, Armenia, Media, and Anatolia, bearing the produce of those lands—spices, cloth, silks, hides, skins, and ornaments, which were exchanged for metals, implements, arms, furniture, and crockery. Caravanserais and counting houses were opened and there was a demand for men who understood the native

language and could act as interpreters and agents. A large English commercial firm approached Mordecai Zevi and appointed him their authorized representative and agent. And thus in a very short space of time the poor poulterer became a highly respected and well-to-do merchant.

But this did not turn his head, and his behaviour proved that it is not only the poor who are pious. He regarded his riches merely as the reward for his piety. True, political and economic conditions had made him, together with the rest of the rapidly growing Jewish community in Ismir, quite wealthy. But what were politics and economic conditions? Nothing, unless they were sent by God as rewards or punishments. And here there seemed to be an obvious moral—the pious life of the Chacham Sabbatai Zevi had brought blessing upon his father and the whole of the community. Old Mordecai felt that this truth must be heralded abroad; it could not be too often or too loudly repeated. And as he was appealing to those who like himself had, as it were, arisen one morning to find themselves prosperous, he met with plenty of people ready to believe and agree.

Thus Sabbatai Zevi again became the centre of interest and won a certain limited recognition. His feeling of self-importance increased, and his previous actions acquired significance. He saw that he had already succeeded in accomplishing something; for had not his spiritual power secured the happiness of at least one whole community? He received daily assurance of this and had no reason to disbelieve it. When he traced this growing importance to its causes, he became ever more firmly convinced that the activities in which he was engaged were precisely

those which guaranteed such an access of value and strength to a man. They were to be found in the Kabala, with its doctrine of the world order, redemption from evil, and the salvation of the world which was beginning to develop and become effective in himself. Who could tell whither it might not lead him if he probed more deeply, far more deeply than he had done hitherto into this science and its ramifications? His labours might bring him rewards hitherto undreamt of!

From this time onward he began to separate himself ever more from the crowd. Whereas formerly he had allowed his followers to accompany him while he carried out his ablutions in the sea, he now forbade them to do so. Each time he performed the symbolic act of purification, he insisted on being quite alone, alone with himself and possibly with his God. And more ambitious expectations inevitably began to take shape in his heart. As a young scholar, a Chacham, the leader of a band of disciples, a man who had brought happiness to thousands, a creature of great personal power of which he was fully aware, he became convinced that all he had done hitherto was not fulfilment but merely an earnest of greater things to come, the first test of his ripening gifts. And he now sought in solitude for the enlightenment, the message, or the vision which would open up to him fresh paths to effective action.

Such paths were necessarily not numerous, for we must not forget his spiritual ancestry. Man and God, a people and a country—these constituted his starting-point and goal, and the bridge between them was—the Messiah.

It was a daring, insensate, megalomaniac process of

reasoning. But it was nevertheless a conclusion which had a meaning and which it was impossible to evade. What other possibility could there be than this, that between these holy things which had become parted, the world and God, and between these realities that had become separated, a people and a country, there stood as mediator, the Messiah? There was only one other possibility—the existence somewhere of a humble and penitent man ready to serve. There were certainly thousands of such men standing between the starting-point and the goal, but in every Age there was always one who was chosen to be more than a servant, and who by various signs and omens was appointed to be the leader. When Sabbatai examined all that he had accomplished hitherto, he felt neither modesty nor hesitation. On the contrary, he only expected to receive ever further confirmation of his power. But he needed some nourishment for his hopes.

These expectations made him blind and deaf to everything about him, and in the way in which he held himself aloof from people there was a silent haughtiness, a tacit insistence on his peculiar holiness. But this in no way diminished his following. As his adherents, however, knew nothing of the secret tenor of his thoughts, they still did not place him above the sphere of ordinary life as a creature to whom the usages and customs of the day and their beliefs did not apply. On the contrary, his father decided that as he was grown up and a man in the eyes of the Law he must find him a wife. Early marriage was a religious precept. Through the Kabala a mystic spirit had been imparted to the ceremony, connecting it with the salvation that was to come, which to be complete re-

quired that all the souls that had not yet been born should come into the world. Any day the Messiah might appear, perhaps tomorrow. Therefore it was incumbent upon a man to get his children married as soon as possible.

In view of Sabbatai Zevi's fame and the respected social position which his father had won it was only natural that the girl chosen to be his bride should be one of the richest and most beautiful maidens in the city. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp and ceremony and both families were supremely happy.

A few weeks after the wedding, however, the young wife presented herself before the Rabbinical court with a strange plea, complaining that she was a wife and yet not a wife. For Sabbatai Zevi had not taken her to him. She was married to him, but he held aloof from her.

The Rabbis were dumbfounded. Never had they known such a case! And they summoned Sabbatai Zevi to appear before the court and answer the charge. He obeyed and admitted the facts, but could advance no plea of justification. As the Rabbis were not competent to inquire into the reasons why he kept aloof from his wife, and as the latter's rights could not be contested, they were forced to pass judgment, and decided that Sabbatai Zevi must either fulfil the duties of a husband or present his wife with the *Get*, the deed of divorcement, as she could not be expected merely to live side by side with a man.

Sabbatai accepted the verdict and did as he was bid, sending his wife a deed of divorcement; and he continued to live his solitary life as before, surrounded by his disciples. His family and friends could understand nothing of all this. They were honestly distressed and could only ac-

count for his peculiar behaviour by supposing that he had not been stimulated by this particular maiden. They therefore set to work to find another possessed of all the qualities expected in a good wife.

Before long such a bride was discovered, and a second marriage was celebrated. But once again after a few weeks had elapsed the second wife also appeared before the Rabbis and like her predecessor complained that she was still a virgin.

For the second time Sabbatai was summoned before the judges and acknowledged the facts, but still offered no explanation. He was ordered to send this wife also a deed of divorcement. But suspicion and ill feeling began to run rife. For a man to reject a woman after he had lived with her and learnt to know her was comprehensible, since he might have come to the conclusion that he could not love her or that she possessed qualities that repelled him. But to marry two women in succession and to refuse to go near either of them gave rise to dark and sinister suspicions. Sabbatai was aware of this and knew he would have to justify his strange conduct, and he proceeded to give an explanation which he knew would be accepted. He said that the Holy Ghost, *Ruach Ha'kodesh*, had announced to him that neither of his two wives had been the bride destined for him by Heaven.

And they believed him, for nothing seemed to these people more plausible than that divine voices should speak to one so pious, and nothing was more remote from their minds than to suppose that an excessively ascetic life could sublimate the passions and destroy sexual potency,

or that association with young disciples might lead to sinful methods of sex gratification.

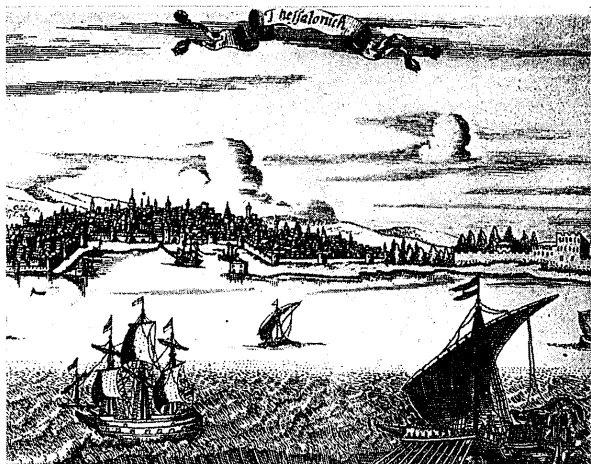
But this explanation was something more than mere justification; it constituted the first clear intimation that his religious observances had brought him into touch with the supernatural world, it was his first declaration that his fate, whether actual or imagined, had been drawn into close and vital connexion with the divine will. The circle which he had for some time been drawing around him began to close, but the fact that the circle was about to be completed by the realization of his vague hopes and aspirations and the enhancement of his self-esteem was due to circumstances beyond his control and to influences from the outside world which had hitherto been closed to him.

Owing to the simple fact that an economic centre had been transferred, another world had come into being in the isolated little Jewish community in Ismir with its narrow and confined outlook, a world of whose existence it had hitherto possessed only an extremely inadequate notion. Through their daily intercourse with the representatives of this new world they began to be aware of certain connexions hitherto unknown, connexions not tangible realities, the inner not the outer mechanism of this new world. The outer mechanism they witnessed daily in the discharge of their business activities. As Jews they were not concerned with it. Their own manner of life was so much a matter of course to them that they pursued it without observing it, and therefore without comparing it with any other. A Jew never asked a man what he was

doing. All he wanted to know was what he was thinking. Jewish inquisitiveness is not concerned with material matters.

Mordecai Zevi's newly acquired position brought him into constant touch with the representatives of this strange outside world, particularly with the Englishman whose interests he was looking after. But it transpired that this same Englishman was a Puritan and that in addition to trading and money-making he was engrossed in spiritual problems, matters of faith and of the morality based upon it. To a man like Mordecai this was familiar ground, a familiar idea, and it brought home to him, moreover, that with all his insular haughtiness this thorough Englishman possessed a considerable knowledge of the Bible and of the religious foundations of Judaism. Thus it was possible to reach an understanding with him.

In searching for the object of their faith and their hope both Jew and Puritan came to the same surprising conclusion, though they reached it by different paths and by means of totally divergent views. They both looked for the advent of a Messiah and Saviour of the world. And in this connexion the Puritan was so far ahead of the Jew that he had already taken practical steps towards the realization of his object. In his native land battles were already being fought, in which the Roundheads under Cromwell were struggling against the intolerance of the Bishops and an autocratic monarch to win freedom for their faith and their mode of life in state and country. And in all they did they showed extraordinary broad-mindedness, aiming at freedom of thought and of faith, not for themselves alone but for every man and every community that



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took religion seriously. They regarded this as all the more necessary because with them, as with the Jews, everyday life was actively permeated by the elements of their faith. To them the Bible, and particularly the Old Testament, was not merely a book to be read, it was the Divine Law which men must strive to fulfil, and to them the Day of Salvation was thrillingly near at hand. The whole structure of Puritanism with Cromwell at its head, in the directness of its actions and the profundity of its faith was deeply rooted in the soil of the Old Testament. The Puritans regarded themselves as characters from the Book of Judges entrusted with the task of setting free an oppressed people. The historical events of the period had placed them in a position very similar to that of the Jews, with whom they accordingly felt themselves sympathetically akin, only regretting that they expected a different Messiah. Cromwell declared that he pitied from the bottom of his heart the unfortunate people whom God had chosen and to whom He gave His Law. For in not acknowledging Him as the Messiah they had rejected Jesus. And he cherished the hope that one day the Old and New Testament would be reconciled and the Jews and Puritans united.

The Jewish Talmudist and the Puritan were led to discuss coming events and while the Jew was able mysteriously to show how the religious exercises of his circle and even of his household were working towards the betterment of the Age, the Puritan, at once pious and practical, could triumphantly point to the fact that in his country the application of his beliefs to actual life had long been preached and discussed. For instance, the duty of keeping holy the Sabbath Day was to be enforced and

it had even been suggested that the Jewish Sabbath instead of Sunday should be the day chosen. Proposals had also been made to reform Parliament along the lines of the old Jewish Sanhedrim, while the ultra-Republican group, the Levellers, attached such importance to the Bible and the faith based on the Bible and so urgently advocated the adoption of the Thora as a general code of law that the cautious Cromwell was forced in one of his speeches in Parliament to say: "When they tell us, not that we are to regulate the law, but that law is to be abrogated and subverted and perhaps wish to bring in Judaical law instead of our known laws settled among us, this is worthy of every magistrate's consideration."

Such was the state of affairs in England and thus far had matters progressed. But the Jew had no need to feel that the Puritan had outstripped him. He could smile. True, he could not point to similar parliamentary measures, but he could show his English friend a far greater and more important reality, a prophecy from the Zohar, the great, fundamental work of the Kabalistic world. The Zohar contained a prophecy that in the next millennium, after the lapse of 408 years, all the inhabitants of the underworld would awake to a new life. The Millennium that was meant in this passage was the sixth in the Jewish reckoning of time, hence the year meant was the year 5408, which corresponded to the year 1648 of the Christian era. In this year great and decisive events were to take place. The Holy Book declared that in this epoch-making year every man would enter into his inheritance.

"But is this the year actually mentioned and written down?" demanded the Englishman. Gently Mordecai ex-

plained to him that in the Hebrew language every letter represented a number, and as the Kabala was concerned with the mystery of promises revealed only to the seer and to the seeker after truth, both letter and numeral, word and hidden meaning, were intimately connected with one another. Thus when the Zohar said "this" year, it laid particular stress on the word "this" and further investigation was indicated. Now the Hebrew for "this" was *ha'soth*, and the number corresponding to *ha'soth* was 5408. But this meant the year 1648 of the Christian era. Thus the great year was indeed near at hand. According to the interpretation of the seers the Messiah was expected to appear in the year 5408.

Neither the alleged fact nor the way in which the Jew communicated it brought any supercilious smile to the lips of the Englishman. For he was in whole-hearted agreement with the Jew, more particularly in regard to the proximity of the great day. The only point on which he persisted in disagreeing with him was as to the precise year. According to him it would not be 1648 but 1666, for though the Jew might have his Zohar, the Christian sectarian had the Revelation of St. John, according to which many, including theologians, reckoned that Christ would return in 1666 and that this year would inaugurate the thousand years of His rule on earth. Nevertheless, this was not to be the last and final salvation, but merely a sort of interregnum. It was the millenarian idea of the Fifth Monarchy referred to in the Apocalypse, and from that day, in the words of the Book of Daniel, the rule of the Holy One would begin. Extremely ancient sectarian ideas were here revived. A large body of men in the Chris-

tian world were also awaiting this Messianic event which was to take place in the old Holy Land and for which the co-operation of the Jews was imperative. And thus two worlds in conflict regarding matters of faith were to be united in one common belief and, in both, men were to hold their breath for a moment while they put their ear to the heart of the universe.

When, after such an exchange of ideas, Mordecai returned home, his son must have marvelled to hear from his lips that things were being talked about in other parts of the world similar to those which for many a year had lent significance to his every thought and action. He seemed to be receiving confirmation from all sides and it was ~~full of a strange power~~. Dreams, expectations and the creations of his heart and mind had apparently for some time past assumed their own independent form in the outside world. Such things were after all tangible realities and there was no longer any need for him to flee into solitude with his ideas which often filled him with strange and unaccountable fear. Nay, there was no longer any reason why he should not believe in their concrete reality and openly express the faith that was in him, were it only by parables. The main consideration was that he was concerned with matters which were terrifyingly near at hand, and not buried in the dim and distant future. His activities were connected with the present. All that he was doing, thinking and yearning for today might be a reality tomorrow. The salvation of the world had been announced. And it was for the man who took the leadership into his hands, the Messiah, to give it to the world. The Age was waiting for a Messiah.

CHAPTER III

Massacres

WHILE those in Sabbatai Zevi's immediate circle grew ever more pious, smug and well-to-do, the youth himself became filled with the most exalted hopes and aspirations producing a condition of unprecedented nervous tension. The Kabalistic books, doctrines, and precepts had done their work. They had led him to prepare himself. But for the moment they could do no more, for he was waiting for the event, the great upheaval. Surely it was high time for this momentous convulsion to occur, to release forces that had long lain dormant and bring about the desired end! But he was demanding the impossible, because he wanted it for his own ends. Nevertheless, were there not certain strange and unaccountable events taking place, events of sufficient magnitude to be connected with his own person and interpreted as a confirmation of his own ideas about himself? Certainly there were! Apparently in Europe, in Poland and the Ukraine, where the mass of rich and cultured Jews had settled down, there had been slight, spasmodic signs of restlessness. Reports to this effect had been brought in by the alms-gatherers who had gone there to collect money for the poor in the Holy Land. Among much that was vague rumour, certain concrete incidents stood out. A Cossack, it seemed, had

killed a Jew and the Polish landlord for whom the Jew was acting as steward had had the Cossack put to death, too. Such tales were heard and consigned to oblivion with the rest. But Sabbatai did not forget and stored them all up in his heart.

Then one day by way of Constantinople there came news which at first no one could even rightly understand. It was said that the Crimea had offered to sell five hundred Jews to the community in Constantinople. What? Had the age of slavery been revived? Were people now trafficking not only in Moors but also in Jews? No, impossible! They were prisoners of war, Jewish prisoners of war from Poland and the Ukraine. But that too was inconceivable, for where and since when had the Jews waged war? War could be waged only by those who either possessed a land of their own or had no other means of acquiring one. But the Jews in Galuth did not ask for land; they asked only for breathing-space. They did not ask to live, they asked to be allowed to exist. They asked not for war but for peace.

By slow and devious ways the truth became known. It was not the Jews who were waging war, it was the small Polish peasants who, in alliance with the Cossacks and the Tatars, were fighting the Jews, or rather not the Jews themselves but the Polish landowners, the nobility. And in this conflict the Jew was the prize and was now being held up by the conqueror for sale and ransom.

The Jewish world began to prick up its ears and it was soon learned that not only were Jews carried off as booty but actually massacred. They were said to number about

a thousand. The deeper reasons for all this were not understood, nor did they require to be understood. For when Jews are killed God is angry, and all that need be known is that He starts something moving; the means he uses are immaterial. But this gives rise to an attitude of dull helplessness. Men feel themselves at the mercy of the moment. Meanwhile ever fresh news crept in to the Jewish prayers. Ten thousand Jews had been massacred, of many the fate was still uncertain. Further offers of sale had come from the Crimea, a thousand, two thousand, three thousand Jews to be sold! And then it was heard that not ten but thirty thousand Jews had been slaughtered and no one could tell where it would end. ✓

Then suddenly the western Jews beheld terrifying spectres in their midst, refugees from the east, hundreds and thousands creeping through the streets of Frankfort, Amsterdam, and Leghorn, terrified, harried, destitute and in rags, horror still depicted on their faces and despair in every movement. They refused to rest; they could not rest. Terror dogged their footsteps. Who said thirty thousand? Why, the number far exceeded sixty thousand, and as the weeks and months went by even that number was proved to be ludicrous. For it could no longer be doubted that the great colony of eastern Jews had been blown up with such violence that its ruined fragments were being scattered over the whole of the civilized world. The last hope and refuge of the Jews in Galuth had been annihilated! Its ruins were swimming in blood! A hundred thousand dead! A new dispersion was taking place. Two hundred thousand dead! The people bowed their heads and groaned. And }

through the blankness of this mute despair loomed a fantastic, inconceivable figure, the more or less final estimate—three hundred thousand dead!

What were the historic causes of this tragedy? Where were they to be found? They lay in the fact of exile which for over two thousand years had produced similar results—exile which forces a people to endure not only their own fate but also the fate of those about them. The densest Jewish colony of this period was to be found in Poland. It was a strictly organized, self-governing community enjoying a semblance of independence. It settled its own affairs; it had its own spiritual life, and managed its own religious and judicial business. It also supplied the Jewish world with interpretations of the Law and with Rabbis at a time when the development of the Jewish spirit had been fatally interrupted, and arrested the process of disintegration by means of an intellectual activity which was a tonic to the weary soul.

In view of all this, Polish Jews imagined that their safety was more or less assured. They had insinuated themselves so early in the economic development of Poland that they were able to increase and multiply with apparent impunity. On the whole they were a flourishing community. But in Poland as elsewhere they could maintain their position only so long as they remained ahead of the rest of the community in economic wisdom. This is an infallible economic law. The moment that stage was passed their qualities began to be regarded as something foreign to the country and they began to be oppressed. This was now happening in Poland. The Jews had led the way in the economic development of the country and their pupils

were now confronting them with merchant bodies, craftsmen's guilds and urban councils which were increasing day by day in number and importance. It need hardly be added that the Catholic clergy and more particularly the Jesuits, who were becoming extremely powerful at the time, sided with their opponents and oppressors.

For awhile they were able to meet this opposition without being in any immediate danger, for they still supplied a need. Two of the most important elements in the Polish state still had an interest in them—the Crown and the nobility. The Crown could not dispense with the Jew as a factor in government, and the nobility required stewards to manage and exploit their large estates and to produce the wherewithal for their luxurious existence as feudal idlers.

Thus the Jew was already acting as a buffer between a growing bourgeoisie and the Crown and nobility. Moreover, he also had to endure the effects of the tension existing between Poles and Russians, nobles and serfs, townsmen and small peasants, Polish Catholics and Russian Orthodox Christians, all of whom were heading towards a catastrophe. The outbreaks occurred in the Ukraine, the basin of the Dnieper and the Dniester with Kiev as the centre, Volhynia and Podolia in the west, and Chernigov and Poltava in the east. This area had become Polish territory only within the last hundred years, but was already in a state of upheaval. In the political sphere the Polish kings ruled as absolute monarchs while economically the Polish nobility governed this new territory through the medium of their estates and owing to the fact that all the inhabitants on their property were given them as serfs.

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To the Pole, the Russian was a contemptible Asiatic outsider. The Catholic hated and opposed the Little Russian of the Greek Orthodox Church, whose religion he declared to be one for slaves, and in the midst of all these differences, for which they cared nothing, the Jews were drawn into the vortex owing to the fact that the nobility employed them chiefly as estate stewards and that consequently, to the oppressed Ukrainians, they seemed to be the real possessors of power. It did not matter to the people that the Jews were merely agents. They were strangers and therefore objects of hatred. They were the instruments of a tyrannical power and therefore doubly hated. The landlord, for instance, used to charge his serfs for the use of the church. When a serf wished to get married, he would therefore have to go to the steward, a Jew, and pay him a certain sum to open the church door. If the dues which the landlord imperiously demanded from his steward were not paid, it was the Jew who went to the serf and took the last cow from his stable. The landlord remained invisible. And although it was against the latter that the oppressed rebelled and from whom he demanded emancipation, it was against the Jew that the lust for bloodshed and murder was turned.

Thus the battle-cry of the oppressed Ukrainians was "Down with the Pans and the Jews!" In this slogan they felt lay the only solution of their troubles. They had at hand an organization which had long been in existence for co-ordinating individual effort and rendering it effectual. The proximity of the wild and boundless steppe which reached as far as the Crimea, across whose wide open spaces nomadic tribes, particularly Tatars, were con-

stantly pouring and invading the cultivated lands on the western banks of the rivers, had led to the formation of a half-military, half-peasant caste for the protection of the country against attack. The members of this body were known as Cossacks and on the farther side of the river Dnieper there were large free and independent Cossack communities. To these Zaporozhian Cossacks the oppressed Ukrainians looked up as to a sort of national militia, or allied outposts, and it was they who organized the first risings. Escaped serfs, criminals, and adventurers formed the dangerous nucleus of this body.

The first uprising took place in the year 1637. The Cossack leader, Pavlynk, invaded the district of Poltava at the head of the peasants and laid waste the land, breaking into Lubny and Lokhvitsa, burning the synagogues and Catholic churches and killing the Catholic clergy and the Jews. A Polish army marched out against him. His troops were defeated and the insurrection collapsed. All it had achieved was to make the institution of serfdom even more rigorous than before.

Ten years later, in 1648, a second attempt was made. It was better prepared and organized and was led by a hetman named Bogdan Chmielnicki, called Chmiel for short, whose personal grievances served only to fortify his passion for the cause of freedom. He outlined a programme for the fulfilment of which he proclaimed a holy war. His aims were the spread of the true faith, the freedom of the Cossacks, and the extirpation of Pans and Jews, and he entered into alliance with his own and his followers' former foes, the Crimean Tatars. In April 1648 the allied army marched into battle; the Polish troops were routed

in two great battles, and at one blow the whole of the eastern area of the Dnieper fell into the hands of the insurgents. The towns and Jewish communities were sacrificed without a chance of defending themselves. Pereyaslavl, Piryatin, Lokhvitsa, and Lubny were destroyed and plundered and the inhabitants driven out. Only those were allowed to survive who consented to embrace the Orthodox Faith.

These successes inspired the insurgents with courage; the movement spread to the region of Kiev, and a wave of blood and terror inundated the land. In May 1648 Vladislav IV of Poland died and with his death the opposition lost their leader and any organization they possessed. Volhynia and Podolia joined the insurgents. The Jews fled from the plains and sought refuge in the fortified cities. But the cunning of the Cossacks and the treachery of Poles who by surrendering the Jews hoped to save themselves, brought about the fall and destruction of these towns also. Thus Nemirov was captured by a ruse, Tulczyn fell through treachery, while Bar, in spite of the resistance offered by both Poles and Jews, capitulated before overwhelming numbers. Polonnoya, too, owed its downfall to treachery. More than twelve thousand Jews had taken refuge in this place, and all who were not taken prisoner by the Tatars, or refused to be baptized, were put to the sword. The flight of the Jews became ever more headlong and desperate. Ostrog, Zaslavl, and Dubno became temporary havens of refuge for fifteen thousand Jews. The country roads were littered with goods and chattels, carts and exhausted fugitives. Any who were caught in the towns or on the highroads were killed. There

was a massacre in Constantinov. Separate armies were formed to pursue their activities in Lithuania and White Russia. The remnants of the fugitive communities of Pinsk, Brest, Chernigov, and Starodub were exterminated, while in Homel there was a regular holocaust. In Zamość, Lublin, Narol, Tomaszow, Szczebreszin, and many other towns, massacres took place the like of which have seldom been known in history.

For it was very much more than an ordinary war. It was a display of passion in which thirst for blood was gratified with unbridled fury. Religious fanaticism and a bestial lust for murder were added to the other horrors which usually darken the pages of history. No decalogue, no law of "Thou shalt not kill" could prevent the assailants from confronting their opponents with the alternative—conversion or death. Here and there the Cossacks scored at least temporary successes by insisting upon this alternative, for some of the Jews saved their lives by professing to have been converted. But almost everywhere, by remaining steadfast and refusing to yield, they displayed a heroism which if the enemy had found it in their own ranks they would have cherished among the highest of their traditions and sung pæans in its honour. But, seeing that it was displayed by the odious and contemptible Jews, it could be met only by death. Thus the history and fate of the Jews led to the formation of a concept peculiar to themselves, the *Kiddush hashem*, or sanctification of the Divine Name, the proof of fidelity to their God, by martyrdom and death. True, other nations had their martyrs, but no other people had endured martyrdom as a constant factor in their life and history for two thousand years.

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The following are typical occurrences. In Nemirov, the hetman Ganya called upon the Jews to adopt his faith. But Jechiel-Michel ben Eliezer, the head of the Jewish school, by way of retort, conjured his brethren to the Kiddush hashem. And on the tenth of June 1648, six thousand Jews accepted death by martyrdom.

Another incident of the kind occurred at Tulczyn in Podolia, where the hetman Krivonoss made a similar proposal. He had all the Jews collected in an open space and summoned them to be converted; they refused, and fifteen thousand Jews allowed themselves to be massacred.

In Polonnaya over ten thousand fugitive Jews had collected. Weakened by privation and suffering, some of them had recourse to conversion. But the vast majority regarded fidelity as more binding and chose death. In Ostropol, the Kabalist Simson collected about him three hundred of his followers, who appeared in the synagogue wrapped in shrouds. When called upon to be converted they merely replied by reciting prayers. And they were killed as they prayed.

In Homel, Chmielnicki himself tried to win the Jewish community over to his faith. But the spiritual head of the community, Rabbi Eliezer, merely had to remind them of their brethren in the faith who had allowed themselves to be massacred for the sake of His Holy Name, and that was enough. They made their peace with one another and commended their souls to God. Whereupon more than two thousand of them were massacred.

The death that was meted out to them was by no means merciful. Those who fell into the hands of the ill-famed Tatars did not suffer so much, for they were merely taken

prisoner and sold to other Jews in various parts of the world. In consequence whole communities went over to the Tatars and voluntarily surrendered to them. But for those Jews who fell into the hands of the Cossacks there was no hope. Nathan Hannover, a chronicler of repute, who is almost disconcertingly precise regarding detail, describes the following incidents among many others he witnessed. "Some of the Jews were flayed alive by the Cossacks, who threw their flesh to the dogs. Some were severely wounded without being fatally injured and then thrown out into the street to prolong their agony. Others were buried alive. Sucklings were stabbed in the arms of their mothers, others torn to bits like fish. Pregnant women were ripped open and the foetus extracted and thrown in their faces. Other victims had live cats sewn up in their bellies and were fastened up with their arms above their heads so that they could do nothing to help themselves. Sucklings were hanged from their mothers' breasts; others were impaled on pikes, roasted and offered to their mothers to eat. In some places Jewish children were thrown in heaps into the rivers to even up fords. . . ."

In addition to these ghastly details there are also anecdotes of the *Eshet chayil*, the heroic woman. A certain Cossack captured a beautiful Jewish girl and wished to make her his wife. She joked with him and declared that she was immune to bullet wounds and thus prevailed upon him to shoot and kill her. Another girl whom a Cossack tried to force into marriage with him agreed to become his wife provided they were married in the church across the river. On the way there she flung herself over the bridge into the water.

But heroism in the individual and the mass could not arrest the paralysis which crept over the Jewish world in the face of these massacres. The terror lasted eight months, from April to November 1648. Never, even during the crusades or epidemics of plague, had Jews fallen in such numbers. However much they might have sinned as the result of the distress and difficulty of their lives, the price they paid was heavier and more terrible than is usually demanded of any sinner on this earth.

The whole of the Jewish world was aghast and it was some time before the extent of the tragedy was fully grasped. It had all happened with such terrific suddenness and communications had been interrupted so swiftly that it was impossible to form any idea of its full significance. In those silent days of fearful expectation, wretched figures appeared from all directions, appeals poured in and written communications arrived. Fugitives flooded the Jewish centres of western Europe and of Turkey, messengers travelled far and wide collecting not as heretofore for the poor in Palestine but for the ransom of those Jews who had fallen into the hands of the Tatars. Subscriptions were raised in Ismir, Salonica, Constantinople, Venice, Leghorn, Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Frankfort. Scholars and men of light and leading organized the work of mercy. The famous David de Carcassoni himself took the lead in Constantinople, and even visited Venice with reports and documents. Here he obtained letters of introduction to Saul Morteira, the Rabbi of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam. Everywhere he found the same state of affairs. The Jews, in fear and trembling, were interested only to know the full extent and significance of

the tragedy. Their history had narrowed their outlook. They understood nothing of the economic conditions or of the political, religious and racial antagonism which had placed the Polish Jews between the hammer and the anvil. All they were concerned with was to discover how their own lives would be affected, and as regards this there was little room for doubt—their last stronghold in the Diaspora had been destroyed. A fresh dispersion had been added to the long list of those that had preceded it and had brought death on hundreds of thousands and incalculable distress and misery on those who survived. It was an obvious and bloody proof that the chain of their misfortunes had not yet ended, but when suffering becomes the constant accompaniment of the life of a people, it also acquires a deeper meaning. Indeed it must do so if they are not to become utterly brutalized and insensitive. Thus the old interpretation was given to their sorrows in dispersion—all suffering was sent as a trial and a means of purification; it was merely the preliminary step to their ultimate salvation, in which they had believed for sixteen hundred years. Time and again they had imagined they had suffered enough, and would at last be found worthy. And, after all, it had not been enough. Their misery and persecution still continued. But this time the Jewish soul experienced a deep feeling of revolt; the Jewish mind was filled with rebellious anguish and indignation and an irrepressible cry of supplication rose from the hearts of the Jewish people to the very steps of the heavenly throne: "It is enough, O Lord!" Nothing more could possibly happen except salvation! If this were not the meaning of their misery it was utterly devoid of meaning; it was merely insensate cruelty,

blind unreasoning fate; God had forgotten them and cast them off. But this they could not bring themselves to believe; to entertain the idea for one moment would have shaken the very foundations of their being. Thus their invincible will to live and fulfil their mission rekindled hope in their breasts; these were the last, the final blows of fate. As these tortured souls could not endure the idea of a fresh dispersion, they interpreted what had happened only as the beginning of their reintegration.

This idea of ultimate salvation was not kindled into fire by the Polish massacres, the latter merely intensified its undying flame. Events in Poland endowed latent Messianism with a thrilling reality, though in any case, as an idea fraught with tense expectation, it was much in evidence at this time. For was this not 1648, the year which various authorities and mysterious sources of information declared to be the year when the Messiah would come? The advent of the Messiah was at hand! Yet what had actually taken place? In his introduction to an elegy, Rabbi Lippman Heller of Cracow says sorrowfully, "In the year 408 (1648) to which we all looked forward as a garden of heavenly glory, the year in which the Children of Israel would return to their home, my blood was shed in torrents." Rabbi Sheftel Horowitz of Posen, quivering with emotion, indignantly asks whether it could really have been God's wish that the worst massacre should have occurred in the month of Sivan, the very month in which the Jews had received the Thora. And referring to the great promise, he complains: "In the very year 408, when I hoped to recover my freedom once more, the evil-doers gathered together to wipe out Thy people."

And these complaints and reproaches, repeated in innumerable hymns and penitential prayers, in *Kinnoth* and *Seli-choth*, became part of the order of service, thus once more uniting the suffering of the people with their liturgy. And thus children of the tenderest years learnt in their morning prayers how their history had been enriched, as it were overnight, with fresh stories of suffering and hope. In this way their living past was confirmed, and mourning for the loss of the centre of their culture gave rise to a blasphemous pun. Polonia was written *po lon yah*, meaning "Here God slumbered."

Latent Messianism seemed to have gone beyond theory and become translated into reality. The Jews were determined to regard this ghastly year as the beginning of the Messianic era. On the title page of his chronicles, *Jeven Mezula*, The Deepest Abyss, Nathan Hannover writes the words *Bi'shnath biath ha'moshiach*, "in the year of the advent of the Messiah." Moreover, he discovered that the name of the great tormentor Chmiel was merely an abbreviation of *Cheble moshiach yabo le'olam*, "the labour pains of the world which is bearing the Messiah." Now Cheble moshiach was what Jewish mysticism had long been discussing and though it had not occurred to any one else, Rabbi Ephraim of Wreschen pointed out that the number corresponding to this word was 1648, the current year of grace.

Thus, with every fibre of their being, the Jews were longing for the coming of the Messiah.

And this desire proceeded to explore the realms of possibility and discovered that there was but one alternative—to draw near to God. But this could be done only by

becoming more worthy and thus having a greater claim upon Him. There were stages in this process of self-discipline, purification and holiness to which the Kabala provided the key. The teaching, dreams and aims of Ari and Vital, those impassioned Kabalists of Safed, the stronghold of Kabalism, and their words of wisdom were no longer confined to the East, but were slowly, step by step, spreading through the whole of the Jewish world. The physical and spiritual agony of the Jews had made them ripe for the doctrine and promises of the Kabala; it had provided them with a weapon and a means of approach to their God. Thus they fasted and repented, mortified the flesh, purified and chastened themselves, animated not by hope of personal advantage or individual salvation, but desirous only for the good of all. The Messiah was bound to come and they tried to make smooth the way before him. Day and night, in every part of the world, in their synagogues, their rooms and by the tombs of their great ancestors, they prayed without ceasing, growing ever more earnest and steadfast in supplication. They had begun their general assault upon God's attention. Surely He *must* hear them! For many what was taking place both on the physical and the spiritual plane was new and terrifying; others were familiar with it. But one man at least had been hoping, longing for and expecting it with all the ardour of his soul, and that was Sabbatai Zevi. It was not that he desired the misery of his people; but, since the world was waiting for a Messiah, the suffering heralding his advent was inevitable. But that it should have assumed such a terrible form, involving not only spiritual but also dire bodily anguish, and brutally assaulting the whole mass of

*Attitude
of Jews
at the time*

the people came as a surprise even to him. And it introduced a fundamental change into his attitude which had hitherto been based entirely on ideas and spiritual speculations. Of what avail was this promise of union with God if the roads were crowded with fugitives who had not where to lay their heads? Surely there was no need to force an entrance into Heaven for the dead and the dying! All that was wanted was a corner on earth for the living. Save souls? Yes! But first of all people themselves must be saved. Every day he met fugitives and men who had been ransomed, fresh reports constantly found their way to the commercial centre of Ismir, and pamphlet after pamphlet giving ghastly details was printed and circulated. At the same time descriptions of the penitential work and the growing longing for a Messiah spread from community to community throughout the world.

For Sabbatai Zevi everything both within and without was in a state of tumult and chaos. Could he not lend a helping hand? Was it not his duty to do so? How could he remain silent, seeing that all the activity and suffering of the day was turned longingly towards those promises which had been the subject of his daily thought and effort? What was the use of his faith and his peculiar gifts, what was the use of his secret knowledge of the road leading to salvation, if he were not in a position to draw the conclusion and cry aloud: "I know how you could be helped!" True, the ideas which had hitherto occupied his mind had not been overmuch concerned with reality. They had been concentrated on spiritual matters and the mysteries of religion. But suddenly he was confronted by men bleeding from actual bodily wounds and people crying aloud for

redemption and a saviour to deliver them from falling eternally into the hands of their enemies and being entirely exterminated. Thus mystic Messianism became permeated with the actual distress of the day and developed into a political and national question.

Eventually he saw that it was impossible to separate these two forms of salvation, but that they must be regarded as one. Nevertheless, he felt that something more was required of him than the mere recognition of this fact. ✓

Calling Was he not called upon to act? Surely he was! He had ceased to regard himself as other than one who had been brought to the forefront by Fate, for he had been a conspicuous personality far too long to be able still to figure as one of the masses. If everything that had happened hitherto in his life had tended to isolate him, increase his importance and make him perceive his unique position, why should not these last decisive events serve a similar purpose? The Age was crying aloud. Maybe the cry was directed at him.

He became more isolated and reserved than ever, withdrawing into himself and trying to find the connexion between himself and current events. The cry for salvation rang in his ears and in his solitude assumed a tone of command. After all there must always be *one* man who responds to the call, and if it was sufficient for men to be crying aloud for a Messiah, why should he himself, Sabbatai, not be the man? But only God's appointed could respond! Before long he had ceased to doubt that his Age and all that was taking place in it were clamouring importunately for him. But he had not yet been given the right to respond. Nothing and nobody had authorized

him to do so. He was a candidate for the post of Messiah on his own authority alone. Nobody had yet said to him, "Thou art he!"

So he began cautiously to question his disciples, asking them what rank they would fain give him in the world and the Age. Like the Messiah of Galilee he asked, "Whom say ye that I am?" And they told him that he had attained the highest rank in scholarship, wisdom, and holiness. But not one of them said, "Thou art the Messiah!" This filled him with fear and stupefaction. Everything that had happened hitherto had confirmed him in his belief, but the final confirmation was not forthcoming. He tried to procure it by other methods. When he returned to his friends from his solitary orisons, descending to earth as it were from a cloud, he would ask them whether they had not observed that like the Messiah promised by Isaiah he had descended out of a cloud. They were dumbfounded and terrified and declared that they had not. But gradually they grew accustomed to his assertions and his questions and interpretations. When on nocturnal walks he declared he saw lights shooting towards him, or heard mysterious voices speaking to him out of the waves, they said they saw and heard them too. When, overcome by horror and pity, and quivering with the secret conviction that he had a mission, he told them the latest news received from all parts of the world and applied to himself the verse in Isaiah, "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come," they believed him.

Thus he led them step by step to put their faith in him and believe things that were hidden from their eyes, and at the same time he made his final preparations for having

himself announced as the Messiah. Soon all boundaries between desire and actuality were obliterated. The future appeared so certain that he felt no qualms at anticipating it. He was like a man who already holds in his hands the gift he is to be presented with only on the morrow. He believed that he had the power to succeed and was blind in his self-confidence. It never occurred to him that he was placing a terrible responsibility on his shoulders. It is such an attitude that leads a man to become a criminal by omission rather than by commission.

Thus it inevitably came about that in the year 1648, after innumerable hints and mysterious innuendoes he one day told his most intimate friends that he was the Messiah, and bade them hold their peace.

This time they were not frightened, but eagerly believed him and accepted his claim. And as they were the first to be regarded as worthy of the revelation, their devotion knew no bounds. They constituted his first secret congregation.

CHAPTER IV

The Pronouncing of the Sacred Name

THE year 1648, for which the advent of the Messiah had been promised, was drawing to a close. Far and wide in every quarter of the globe people were becoming ever more eager and expectant. But nothing happened which could be interpreted as a response or a fulfilment. Not a sign was to be seen. Apparently nobody knew that at this time there was in Ismir a young Kabbalist of twenty-two who had assured his most intimate friends that he was the Messiah. Meanwhile suspense was reaching the breaking-point.

Sabbatai's mind was also hovering between expectation and realization. There were only a few more weeks to run; if nothing happened Fate would belie every hope and every promise, and the dawn of the New Year would deal the death blow to belief. But that was so inconceivable that it simply must not happen! As the Messiah had been promised, he must surely come; and since no one else had risen up and declared, "I am he!" Sabbatai became more than ever convinced that he must be the man, and the question, "If it is not I, then who can it be?" presented itself again more forcibly than ever to his mind.

If, as was quite possible, another had been called, why was he not making himself known? What reason could he

have? Was he still awaiting the final confirmation from above? In that case he could not be the true Messiah and he himself, Sabbatai Zevi, must be the man. True, even in his own case everything was not yet plain; he had not yet been vouchsafed the final irrefutable sign. But at all events he had already made an attempt; he had challenged his God and no thunderbolt had struck him down as a blasphemer. To his own intimate circle he had proclaimed himself and had only acquired fresh confidence thereby. Possibly all that was required to settle everything was for him to proclaim himself publicly. Time was pressing. Surely it could not be a crime to hearken to the cry of distress and respond. The Age might turn and rend him, but he must make the attempt.

Quivering with excitement and fear he staggered out mechanically into the night and along the streets, his faltering footsteps drawn irresistibly in the direction of the synagogue where every day prayer and supplication filled the air but received no response. And he stood looking down on the covered heads of the worshippers, a terrible battle raging in his heart between fear and an overwhelming impulse to make the announcement that would solve all problems. Then suddenly as the whole place and the crowd of worshippers seemed to become a blur of dazzling light, he stepped on to the *Almemor*, the dais from which the Scriptures were read, and above the murmur of prayer called out at the top of his voice the full name of God which no Jew after the dispersion had ever pronounced. In a moment all was silent as the grave. What was that? It was surely the *Shem ha'mforash*, the full name of God, which only the High Priest was allowed to

pronounce in Jerusalem on the site of the Temple, or a man, who for the sake of the Holy Name, was dying a martyr's death. But this young Chacham was not such a fool as not to know these laws. Was he then a blasphemer of his God? Impossible! For he was the most pious in an Age when all were pious. They also knew, however, that, in addition to being pious, the Age was seething with excitement. Possibly the young man on the Almemor had been so overcome and carried away by the spirit of the times that he did not know what he was doing and was not responsible for his actions. But in any case, the magnitude of the offence was well-nigh incredible, though in an Age of such terrific upheavals perhaps it was not for them to judge. If God's name had been taken in vain and He had been unjustifiably exorcized, surely He would defend Himself. And He certainly had been exorcized. For the utterance of God's name in full summoned His spirit and forced Him to become present—exorcized Him in fact. The priest might do so because it was his function. The martyr might do so, for he was on his last journey home. And once but once only might the Messiah do so, for then the utterance was his reply to God's call. But as this young man was not a priest, a martyr, or the Messiah, nothing but evil could result. And the congregation were terrified. The event must on no account be made public. It must be hushed up to prevent fear and consternation outside. They must pretend to be blind and deaf and continue praying and forget what had happened. And once again the worshippers raised their voices and filled the synagogue with loud song. Nothing had happened. Nothing must be thought to have happened. One

or two of Sabbatai's disciples raised their hands excitedly and tried to cry out, but they were paralysed by the deathly silence, followed by the loud singing of the worshippers, and held their tongues.

But one of the congregation, a certain Isaac Silveira, to whom the three alternatives had occurred exactly as they had to all the rest, was seized by a sudden inspiration when he turned the third over in his mind. The man looked as though he had the right to utter the sacred Name, and raising his eyes to him he whispered shyly, "Messiah?" In the loud murmur of prayer his voice was drowned, but Sabbatai, whose eyes were eagerly scanning every face, saw from the movement of his lips that at least one man had understood and correctly interpreted the meaning of his cry. Possibly there were others who would like to believe but were held back by fear. They called aloud in prayer for a Messiah, and yet when he ascended the Almemor and offered himself to them, they shut their eyes! Sabbatai Zevi was very sore at heart. Was all his self-discipline, all his prayer and mortification of the flesh, all his sorrow, doubt, and striving to end only in this unmistakable silence of rejection? It did not occur to him to inquire whether this denial had not been a response prompted by an unfailing instinct which he must therefore humbly accept. He was not humble. He was arrogant because he demanded recognition. He regarded himself as an unrecognized Messiah. He knew that the true Messiah would be denied by men, and he was therefore more than ever convinced that he was the man. There was defiance in his attitude. He would force them to recognize him as he had forced Isaac Silveira.

This man was his first adherent and as a reward would in due course receive a crown.

A significant anecdote was current about this time. A class of young men, sitting round a table in the school-house, asked their teacher, a famous Rabbi, how they could recognize the Messiah. Would they be able to do so by the miracles he performed? The old Rabbi raised his eyebrows in astonishment. "Miracles!" he exclaimed. "But Jesus of Nazareth performed miracles, and yet he was not the Messiah. No! We shall recognize the Messiah by the fact that all will believe in him and none will doubt."

After his wild utterance in the synagogue of Ismir, Sabbatai devoted every moment of his day to petty efforts calculated to achieve this end. His magnificent gesture in the crowded synagogue had amounted to drawing a bow at a venture, and he was perhaps never more sincere and inspired than he had been at that moment. But as, after such an act, there could be no drawing back, and such exaltation could not be recalled at will, he was compelled to confine himself to sober practical detail and spadework drudgery. Silveira brought him two other important supporters, Mose Calmari and Mose Pinheiro, the brother-in-law of the great Italian Rabbi and Kabbalist, Joseph Ergas. These men formed the nucleus of a body who forthwith unhesitatingly recognized Sabbatai as the appointed Messiah. Their object was gradually to increase their circle by adherents who were absolutely reliable and convinced, and for this it was above all imperative that nothing should happen to make them appear suspect or odd to the mass of the people. They

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therefore made a point of strictly observing all the precepts of the Law and at this period they might have been taken for a group of particularly pious men, had not various little commotions and disturbances repeatedly been traced to them from time to time. They directed their attention more particularly to the poor, for in that Age of distress and misery there were poor even in the wealthy city of Ismir, since the indigent and needy from all parts poured into the town in order to share the prosperity of the Jewish community and the rest of the inhabitants. Most of these refugees came from the neighbouring country of Palestine which had not escaped the troubles prevalent elsewhere. The alms that had hitherto poured in from Poland had ceased to do so as the donors were now beggars themselves, and the subscriptions raised in the Jewish world were all devoted to the cause of those who had fallen into the hands of the Tatars. Famine had broken out in Jerusalem, the Holy City, and it was to these people, hounded out by hunger, that Sabbatai addressed himself. For they would surely be the first to understand that a terrible calamity must have occurred for Jews at this juncture to be driven out of the very city whither they were supposed to return. Such a diaspora could occur only before the ultimate settlement, that is to say, the final gathering together of the tribes.

He found adherents among them and occasionally, when he was particularly eloquent in the promises he made and the hopes he held out, disturbances on a small scale would break out. The crowd invaded the synagogues and schools and tried to rouse their brethren and prepare

needed to poor for support.

them to recognize the Messiah. Disputes occurred, sometimes sufficiently serious to lead to blows, and this produced a state of tension and discord which endangered the peace of the community.

The Rabbis kept a watchful eye on these events and had everything that occurred in Sabbatai's circle reported to them. They could not forget that he had pronounced the *Shem ha'mforash*, and Escapa above all, Sabbatai's former master, knew his pupil too well not to be aware that he would not be over-scrupulous in distinguishing between fact and fiction, and that he was not only pious but also ambitious. But ambition and piety are mutually antagonistic. True, for the moment Sabbatai's conduct was remarkable only for a more than customary display of piety, and consequently Escapa felt he could do no more than warn his former pupil with regard to the little disturbances of which he was the focus. He told him to keep quiet. The Age was sufficiently disturbed without his adding his quota to the troubles all around.

And indeed there was no lull in the disturbances and upheavals. When, in November 1648, Jan Kasimir, the Cardinal Primate of Gniezno, was elected King of Poland in succession to Vladislav IV, he opened negotiations for peace with Chmielnicki, and for a short time the massacres ceased. But they broke out again in the summer of 1649. True, Chmielnicki was defeated by the reorganized Polish army, but in the following year he found a fresh opportunity for attacking the Poles and the Jews. By slow degrees the number of Jewish victims rose to alarming proportions; but apparently the last phase of the upheaval had been reached, and suddenly all was quiet.

With the tragic capacity for 'adaptation which the Jews had acquired during the course of their turbulent history they once more raised their heads. They saw that the decisive defeat inflicted by Jan Kasimir on Chmielnicki had rendered the latter harmless at all events for the time being. For the moment they were safe and could look to the future with some degree of confidence. And they immediately set to work to rebuild the system which was the backbone of their existence. They summoned the representatives of the four Polish divisions to meet in Lublin in 1650 and renewed their shattered organization. Furthermore they secured Jan Kasimir's consent for all those who had been forced to embrace Christianity under threat of persecution to return to their own faith. They succeeded in having their captive women and children set free and spent their last farthing in ransoming those who had fallen into the hands of the Tatars. They made the twentieth of Sivan, the anniversary of the destruction of Nemirov, another day of solemn fast and commemoration, and in honour of their martyrs undertook not to wear brocade, velvet or silk for a period of three years. Again they felt they could look ahead, and began once more to sublimate their sorrows in poems, dirges, and prayers. Their gift for life was as great as their gift for death.

Something of this eager desire to live and to lay hold of reality went out from them to the rest of the Jewish world. True, the idea of the Messiah was not forgotten, and still lay dormant. But as the turmoil in the outside world calmed down, the idea itself became spiritualized and ceased its insistent demand for concrete expression.

A man like Sabbatai Zevi, however, could not be satisfied with such a state of affairs. For he had crossed the Rubicon and was not prepared to turn back. Moreover, he clearly perceived that unique conditions prevailed which might cause latent Messianism to raise its head at any moment, and that, in spite of all, hundreds of thousands were ready to accept a Messiah if he presented himself in the flesh. The Age was seeking for a Messiah to save it, and, confronting it, was a man seeking for an Age to accept him. If the two met, a great movement might result, and Sabbatai was prepared to do his share in bringing about this consummation.

But the people about him were not willing to accept this solution. While they recognized that a Messiah must come, they could not bring themselves to acknowledge this young man who had grown up under their own eyes, whose intelligence they admired and whose peculiarities they met with an indulgent smile, but whom, in their heart of hearts, they disliked for surrounding himself with an air of mystery. Moreover, they could not forgive him for the blasphemous utterance of the Holy Name and they took it very much amiss that he was acquiring power over the poor and creating unrest among them. True, he had not yet publicly declared himself to be the Messiah, but had confined himself to a symbolic gesture. But that he would one day seriously advance his claims was certain. This they wished to forestall, not merely because they denied his personal assumptions, but also because, with their fingers on the pulse of the Age, their sound business-like instincts told them that it required both internal and external peace, peace at any price, to

allow the gaping wounds to heal. Any one who interfered with this healing process drew upon himself the enmity of those whose duty it was to watch over the welfare of the people—the Rabbis.

This was no secret to Sabbatai and he held his hand and avoided every kind of public demonstration, but continued to work below the surface and add to the small circle of his followers. He met with considerable success, for those whom he had made up his mind to convince found it extremely difficult to resist him. Moreover, he had a strong ally in the state of expectation everywhere prevalent, which he exploited to add to the number of his followers. Like a keen business man securing fresh customers every day, he hoped that the time would come when he would win sufficient support to proclaim himself publicly without any risk of failure. But the passion which had moved him to pronounce the Holy Name was now lacking and his reserve gave the impression of cowardice. He concealed himself and kept out of the way of the Rabbis as much as possible, but they watched him so closely that at last they collected sufficient evidence to deal him a staggering blow.

They did not do him the honour of opposing his claim to be the Messiah, but placed the *Cherem*, or ban, upon him as a disturber of the peace and a teacher of false doctrine, pronouncing the terrible curses which were but the agonized cry of terror on the part of a threatened community: "By command of the angels and the judgment of the Holy One, we banish, cast out, curse and condemn Sabbatai Zevi, wherein our Lord God consenteth and the whole of the community in accordance with

the holy Thora and the six hundred and thirteen rules set down therein, and in accordance with the curse wherewith Elisha cursed the children and with all the curses that are written in the Law. Cursed be he by day and cursed by night, cursed when he lieth down, cursed when he riseth up, cursed when he goeth out, and cursed when he cometh in. God shall not forgive him. For the anger and fury of God shall be kindled against him and bring down upon his head all the curses that are written in the Law. His name shall be blotted out from Heaven and his memory shall die out from the host of Israel. No man shall have aught to do with him, none shall speak to him or write, none shall show him favour or tarry beneath his roof or remain within four ells of his presence, and none shall read aught written by his hand."

Had the Rabbis of Ismir known what the result of their curse would be, it would have remained unuttered. } ✓
 They would have left Sabbatai and his little conspiracies alone until all his efforts had vanished in smoke. But, as it was, they introduced into his life an element upon which from that moment he proceeded to thrive and which helped him to an ascent it was impossible to arrest. For a blow from outside was met with the passivity which accepts events with almost feminine ardour, and with craven endurance and submission gradually works them up and converts them into power. The instigator of the action, his teacher Escapa, was aware of this, for he was familiar not only with his pupil's intellect but also with his temperament, and he had warned the Rabbis that the only way to rid themselves of the nuisance was to get rid of Sabbatai himself. And no one could blame him for this,

seeing that he had the support of Jewish law which laid down that any man who took the Name of God in vain should be punished with death. Escapa proposed that the congregation should accept the penitential fine and that in consideration of his good works the Rabbis should forgive the sinner in advance. But to the others this seemed a disciplinary measure quite out of keeping with the crime and they decided in favour of the ban, thus virtually inaugurating the greatest Messianic movement Jewry was to experience throughout the Diaspora.

The gravity of this ban did not in any way perturb Sabbatai, though he perceived the danger that threatened and knew that it was impossible for him to remain in Ismir. He understood that the ban was only a mild form of death sentence, but he had neither the will nor the energy to defy it. He preferred to yield and take flight; but even this decision infused fresh spirit into him. For he knew that, whatever might be the ostensible reasons for the ban, it was at his Messianic pretensions that Escapa and the others were striking. It gave him great satisfaction to see that people were reacting to his work; it proved to him the importance of his actions. And, because it was so important, he would have to bear the consequences of it—here we see how everything was converted into a ground for satisfaction in his mind—and the price of it was suffering, that suffering which from time immemorial had been prophesied would be the lot of the Messiah and was inevitably connected in men's minds with the idea of a Messiah. The Messiah would be reviled, persecuted, and made to suffer. These were some of the signs whereby he would be recognized. And these

signs were clearly manifesting themselves in the life of Sabbatai Zevi. Thus did the curse become a blessing. ✓

Before he left Ismir he told his intimate friends that the city which was driving him out would one day welcome him back as King. It might be years before he returned, but return he certainly would; and with this firm conviction in his mind, he appointed two of his disciples his representatives, bidding them await his return in power. They were Chaim Dov of Salonica and Shalom Israel of Ismir. In their presence he solemnly proclaimed himself the true Messiah appointed by God, and conjured them to promote his cause in every possible way during his period of exile.

Whereupon he set out on his travels, well provided with funds by his father and brothers. The fresh blow he had been dealt made him feel more than ever convinced that he must persevere in his self-appointed task, and his belief in himself grew hard as steel. The world had at last really received a Messiah!

His life at this time was not guided by any clear or well-thought-out plan, and the discrepancies in the various accounts of his travels seem to indicate that he wandered to and fro, backwards and forwards, as chance and the acceptance or rejection of his mission determined. But he never wearied in his efforts to acquire influence, and win adherents to his cause, continually asserting his claims and demanding recognition and support. Since his father and brothers believed in him, his other relatives could do no less. He accordingly went to Morea. The people there had already heard of him and for the first time he had the profound satisfaction of learning that

rumours and semi-legendary reports had heralded his arrival. So he did not stop long in the district. If such a remote and insignificant community had heard about him, the more important centres of Judaism would surely be even better informed. Jerusalem above all attracted him like a magnet. But as the Holy City seemed to demand decisive action and far-reaching decisions, he preferred to start farther afield. Thus he visited a number of Greek cities, but very little is recorded of his activities there. In Athens he was at first welcomed as a scholar, but on hearing that he was under a ban, the community would have nothing more to do with him, and there was no alternative but for him to leave the city.

He was not in any way discouraged, and since circumstances kept him constantly moving, his spirit also remained active and alert. He felt quite rightly that he would be remembered wherever he had been, and the cumulative effect of all these memories would mean his ultimate recognition. The pomp and ceremony with which his wealth enabled him to enter one city after another served him in good stead, and he exploited his advantages to the utmost, when he decided to go to Salonica, the capital of Macedonia, to put his fortunes to the test.

Salonica was an exceedingly wealthy and cultured Jewish city. In addition to 22,000 Jews, including women and children, it had 10,000 Turks and 4000 Greeks within its walls. It contained thirty synagogues and two large schools with thousands of pupils who flocked to the place from all parts of the East. It was the stronghold of Kabalistic lore, and here Sabbatai could

hope for a sympathetic hearing. But experience had made him cautious, and he refrained from making any public announcement of his claims because he wished first to ascertain to what extent the people would be ready to accept the idea of a living Messiah. Thus when he visited the Rabbis, he said nothing about his Messianic mission, but presented himself merely as a scholar, with the result that he was able to reckon on a good reception everywhere. Nevertheless he was far from being an unknown quantity to the Rabbis of Salonica. Though they may not have been aware of the ban, they certainly knew that some years previously he had uttered the *Shem ha'mforash* aloud in the synagogue and they were anxious to learn the reason from his own lips.

Thus a unique opportunity presented itself for him to say that since he was the Messiah he had the right to do so. But he refrained. He probably still felt too much isolated. And so with a grave and deprecatory gesture he evaded the question, and replied that it was a secret which would be revealed all in good time.

But although he had not the courage to advance his claim, he could not refrain from making a symbolic gesture to find out whether they would not light upon the truth of their own accord and spontaneously acclaim him as the Messiah. He had done so once in Ismir and one man had responded. Possibly here many would do so.

He accordingly invited the Rabbis of the city to a huge and sumptuous banquet, and while they were eating and drinking and conversing learnedly together, he suddenly rose from the table and took a scroll of the Thora from behind a curtain. They all gazed at him in aston-

ishment. What was he going to do now? He came forward before them all, his face aglow, clasping the scroll tightly to his side as though it were his bride, and called upon the Rabbis to celebrate his marriage with the Thora.

Would they understand the symbol? Would they spring to their feet and hail him as he hoped? Nothing of the kind! He was met by embarrassed astonishment and angry silence. At last from the end of the long table an indignant and contemptuous voice cried out, "The fellow is mad!" The others nodded and murmured, "Aye!" Then they all rose and tried to leave. But Sabbatai laughed coldly and scoffingly at their backs, forcing them to turn round. He was quite capable of dealing with the situation and would not allow his guests to depart without having put them in the wrong. Why, he asked, did they try to deny the prophets? Had not the prophets declared that the Holy Script, the epitome of truth, must be the wife of all who loved truth? This was all he had meant when he invited them to witness the solemn ceremony.

Vexed and embarrassed and with the word "Mad!" still on their lips, they shrugged their shoulders. But again there was one, a relative of his teacher Escapa, who had understood and grasped the symbol. When the others took their departure he secretly remained behind and with trembling confidence approached Sabbatai. "What was the real meaning?" he asked. Sabbatai, aware of the importance of even one who has been conquered, dropped all restraint and, opening his heart, told the man that he was the Messiah chosen and appointed for the Age. But he conjured him to hold his tongue as long

as he remained in Salonica and only to speak when he had departed. Isaac Levi promised, and, as the sequel will show, proved one of Sabbatai's foremost and most faithful and efficient supporters.

On the following day, Sabbatai, as he expected, was advised by the Rabbis to leave the city as soon as possible; otherwise he would be driven out. He raised no objection. After all, suffering and persecution were his appointed lot as Messiah. Moreover, for the time being there was nothing more he could do in the place; when he had left, another would make his proclamation for him. Thus it seemed as though his path were being mapped out for him and all he had to do was to obey. On the following day, when he set out for Constantinople, he really believed that this was so.

For the Oriental Jews, in all their concerns, Constantinople was then, as for the whole East, the principal city of the Turkish Empire, and they readily acknowledged the superior authority of the scholars and Rabbis who lived there, particularly in the realm of jurisprudence. But even the uneducated Jews benefited by the wealth and culture of the capital, and a well-to-do and influential bourgeois class had come into being there which ruled the Jewish community of the place. Whereas in Ismir Sabbatai had addressed himself to the poor, in Constantinople he turned to the wealthy, for, after all, without their help, or in opposition to them, he could achieve nothing. Once again he presented himself merely as a scholar, a traveller and wealthy man of the world, in which capacity he was certain to meet with a sympathetic reception at the hands of the Jewish bourgeoisie.

Naturally he could not long remain satisfied with this purely social position, as he never allowed himself for one moment to lose sight of the object of his travels. Wherever he could not produce an immediate effect, he endeavoured at least to prepare for the great revelation. Thus in the circle of the Kabalists, he sought for kindred souls and found them. First and foremost was Eli Cardachione, an old Kabbalist recluse. True, he did not yet reveal himself to him, but made of him a faithful and trustworthy friend and a believer in the idea that the Age would produce a Messiah. Even more important and lasting were his relations with the Kabbalist, Abraham Jachini, a pupil of the famous Joseph di Trani.

Jachini was a man of great versatility and his gifts had made him famous in Constantinople and abroad. In Constantinople he used to preach in the synagogues and expound the Kabala. He also wrote Kabbalistic essays, and if these proved incomprehensible to the Jewish bourgeois of the city the latter modestly ascribed this to their mysterious depths, never suspecting that it might be due to the fact that they were full of confused mysticism, arbitrary and fantastic conceptions and dream experiences based on hidden eroticism. When Jachini was not writing original compositions he used to copy foreign texts, an art in which he achieved notable skill. His copies were eagerly sought after by collectors and scholars all over the world, and he found buyers for his calligraphic masterpieces in a city as remote as Amsterdam.

Abraham Jachini and Sabbatai Zevi had so much in common that they soon became fast friends. But Sabbatai remained the leader. Although he was the younger

he never allowed himself to be led away by wild-goose schemes, and thus without Jachini being aware of it, he succeeded in making him a pliable instrument and a reliable helper in case he performed a third symbolic act, and again tried to open the eyes of the indolent and expectant masses who were looking for a Messiah. In their joint studies they discovered that in the year 1460 a Jewish astronomer named Abraham had prophesied that the Messiah would be born when the planets Jupiter and Saturn were in conjunction in the sign of Pisces. Probably neither Sabbatai nor Jachini understood anything about astronomy, but Sabbatai was so deeply impressed by this cosmic picture that he determined to make use of it for his symbolic gesture. So he placed a fish in a bassinet as though it were a baby and carried it through the busy streets of the Jewish quarter. The people pressed round and asked the meaning of this strange proceeding, and he replied that it had been said that under the zodiacal sign of Pisces Israel would be released from bondage.

Many of those present were delighted by this outward and visible sign and its mysterious interpretation. But the Rabbinical authorities were highly incensed. How could so agreeable and apparently so clever a young man be guilty of such foolery? He must be made to understand that he was behaving like a child, so that the inquisitive and those who were always hankering after excitement and sensation should make no mistake about his behaviour. They accordingly sent a schoolmaster to Sabbatai to instruct him and bring him to reason. The man took his duties very seriously and when Sabbatai dared to con-

tradict some of his assertions he availed himself of the privileges of his office and thrashed his recalcitrant pupil.

Had Sabbatai not been obsessed by his idea he would have left the city of his own accord after this humiliation. But, utterly unmoved, he regarded the event merely as
4 another link in the chain of suffering and persecution which as the Messiah he was bound to undergo. And when the Rabbis, under threat of severe punishment, forbade the Jews even to frequent Sabbatai's company, he piously
6 accepted the inevitable isolation. Constantinople was far too important to him and the results he had achieved there were still too insignificant for him to leave without being forced to do so. And subsequent events justified his undignified sojourn.

Just about this time David Capio, the alms-gatherer, came from Jerusalem. He was a clever man and a zealous follower of the faith. He did not beg for alms, he demanded them. The Jews of that day regarded charity and duty as synonymous; in fact in Hebrew there is only one word for the two—*Mitzvah*. Now David Capio demanded *Mitzvah* not only as part of the penance he was urging the Jews to perform, for without penance and alms they as a people could not be saved, but also because everything seemed to be pointing to the fact that salvation was at hand. Sabbatai pricked up his ears. He contributed munificently to the fund for the poor in Jerusalem and thus won Capio over to his side, with the result that a conclave of four, Capio, Jachini, Carcadchione, and Sabbatai used to meet to discuss the possibilities of the future. There was an atmosphere of conspiracy about their meetings, as though they were groping about a circle

with a mysterious centre, but before the mystery was solved Sabbatai spoilt everything by his impetuosity.

One day while the four were conferring together, several Rabbis presented themselves saying they wished to know from Capio's own lips what he thought about the suffering of the Age and when he expected it to end. Whereupon Sabbatai lost control. He shouted at them and told them that they could not possibly understand the Age, as they understood nothing whatever even about God. God, he declared, had not created the world from necessity but out of pure love, in order that men might recognize Him as Creator and Master. But they knew neither love nor reverence, nor were they ready to repent. One day God would give them a terrible awakening.

His outburst was entirely one of rage, and even he himself did not know how soon his words would be fulfilled. For in the following year, 1659, a terrible fire broke out in Constantinople causing great havoc, particularly in the Jewish quarter, so that more than one recalled the man who had shown them the symbol and whom they had thrashed for so doing.

But at the time this outburst of temper merely exhausted the patience of the Rabbis, who without further ado ordered Sabbatai to leave Constantinople immediately. On this occasion he yielded because he was threatened with violence. But as usual the very act of yielding provided him with an opportunity for a remarkable extension of his power.

Abraham Jachini had long been aware of Sabbatai's aim and object and felt that he was eagerly seeking for a confirmation of his call. As a Kabbalist Jachini knew that

a Messiah must come about this time. Perhaps Sabbatai was the man, perhaps somebody else. The important point was that a Messiah *was* due to come. The first man to come forward and proclaim himself and win acceptance would in truth be the Messiah. This was not blasphemy, for all his reading told him that the Messiah would not come on his own account but to fulfil a mission. So he might confidently regard Sabbatai as the man. All that he lacked for the part was recognition, and if he could provide him with this he would be performing a meritorious act. It was inspiring to think that he might have a share in revealing the Messiah and securing the salvation of the suffering world, and he quivered with excitement as he imagined himself the creator of the Messianic throne whose occupant would one day point down at him and say, "There stands the man who first recognized me!"

What could he do to achieve this end? He could only interpret the Kabala and write beautifully. But stay, he could do more! He could copy! He could write and copy so well that no one could distinguish the copy from the original. He could forge documents of which the paper, the ink and the style of writing so accurately reproduced those of another era that no one dared to say they were the work of his hand and had been made only yesterday. How many such "genuine" original documents had he not already sold in the open market to rich Christian collectors!

- So when Sabbatai came to take leave of him he received him with an air of mysterious solemnity and led him to a remote chamber of his house. There he opened a chest and took from it a roll of parchment. At the first glance Sabba-

tai could see that it was very old and had been rolled and tied up for many a long year. The scroll was rather creased, the writing was trembling and bleached with age; it was an old, a very old manuscript. Jachini handed it to Sabbatai. "Read!" he said.

Sabbatai read the title: "The Great Wisdom of Solomon," and as he looked inquiringly up at Jachini, the latter declared, "I found it some time ago in a cave. It concerns you."

This was the burden of its contents. "I, Abraham Acher, was shut up for forty years in a cave in sore distress because the great monster that dwelleth in the river of Egypt still sat upon the throne. And I tried to solve the mystery why the Age of miracles would not come. And lo! I heard the voice of my God saying, 'In the year 5386 there shall be born to Mordecai Zevi a son, and he shall call his name Sabbatai. And he shall overthrow the great dragon and kill the serpent. He shall be the Lord's Anointed and shall sit upon My throne. His kingdom shall last for ever and he and no other shall be the saviour of My people Israel.' "

Sabbatai read to the end. An oppressive silence ensued, full of mute understanding. In such a case there is neither deceiver nor dupe, for the one provides the means, while the other accepts them, because both are profoundly convinced of the necessity of the object to be achieved. It was this conviction that made the document genuine. All those who believed its contents and in the Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi, might refer to it with a clean conscience. Thus equipped, Sabbatai left the capital to continue his wanderings, while Abraham Jachini remained behind to act as his disciple and herald.

The Ploughed Field

SABBATAI had been travelling for eight years, never settling down, but always obsessed by his object and intent on gaining influence. He sowed his seed wherever he went, though no one could tell as yet whether wheat or tares sprang up behind him. But whatever the crop, the soil must be prepared for the sower, and the history of religions proves that good rich soil has always been ready to hand and never arid wasteland. On his travels Sabbatai found the fields everywhere about him already ploughed by the ploughshare of current events. After an interval of barely five years, the second act of the Polish tragedy had opened. Chmielnicki, not satisfied with the success he had won, and intent on avenging his defeats, had found an ally in the Tsar, Alexius Mikhailovich. The latter informed the King of Poland that certain parts of White Russia and Lithuania which were contiguous to his province belonged to him, and in support of his claim a united Muscovite and Cossack army invaded Poland in 1654. In keeping with changed political conditions, the slogan was now, "For Russia and the Orthodox Faith!" But the result as far as the Jews were concerned was the same. For even this slogan was directed against them, since they were not Orthodox, and there was a fresh outbreak of devasta-

tion and massacre, Smolensk, Mstislavl, Bychov, Homel and many other towns being destroyed. As had happened in the first upheaval the Cossacks massacred right and left, while their allies confined themselves to either driving out the Jewish communities or taking them prisoner. In the autumn of 1655, in Mogilev, Vitebsk and Vilna, all Jews who were unable to escape or refused to be baptized were put to the sword, and in these holocausts the Greek popes took the lead. Lemberg, which was strongly fortified and defended, once again succeeded in evading capture. In vain did Chmielnicki call upon the town to deliver the Jews into his hands. "The Jews," he declared in support of his demand, "are the enemies of Christ and of the whole of Christendom and must therefore be delivered up together with their wives and children and all their possessions." To atone for his failure at Lemberg, he forced his way into Lublin, which his Cossacks entered on the eve of the Feast of Tabernacles. They looted the city, drove all the Jews into the synagogue and then set fire to it. Those who were not burnt to death were massacred with such appalling cruelty by the Cossacks, who scoured the streets like ravening wolves, that we must refrain from quoting the reports of eyewitnesses.

As if this were not enough, the Jews now became involved in another conflict which likewise did not concern them. In the autumn of 1655, Charles X of Sweden invaded Poland and almost without a shot being fired occupied the whole of greater and lesser Poland. He did not regard the Jews as war booty and therefore spared them, and they naturally responded by loyal support. But this made them suspect. Whereas in other parts of Poland their

brethren were being murdered, here they were exhorted to be patriotic, and when the Polish War of Liberation under the national "saviour" Stephen Czarniecki broke out, the Jews became the victims of a lust of vengeance which expressed itself with a brutality compared with which even Chmielnicki's outrages were mere child's play. Brest-Kuyavsk, Gniezno, Lezno, Plotsk, Lenczyka, Kalisz, Sandomierz, Opatow, Chmielnik, Voidislav and many other places became the scenes of martyrdoms unparalleled in history. Even Polish and German chroniclers describe the behaviour of the Poles as "barbaric and utterly un-Christian." It is impossible accurately to estimate the number of victims that fell in the widespread massacres. Contemporary estimates compute them at about half a million. In any case, they outnumbered the Jews killed in the Crusades and by the ravages of the Black Death together. When the new taxation registers came to be compiled, it was found that about seven hundred communities had completely vanished or had only a few survivors left, that not a single Jew was to be found in eastern Ukraine, and that in Volhynia and Podolia only a tenth of the Jewish population had been spared.

When the first massacres had occurred the Jews had been able to cry out indignantly and compile a martyrology. But now they were dumb. The written records consist almost exclusively of a catalogue of places and people. In hopeless silence and abysmal despair, they kept watch over the remnants of their people, who like shades tramped listlessly along every road which offered them a chance to escape. The great military highways were thronged with them; close on to three thousand Lithuanian Jews went

by sea to Texel in the Netherlands. Untold numbers streamed into Germany, Moravia, Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, Italy, and the Turkish provinces. Wherever they went they not only bore witness to the tragedy that had befallen them and cried aloud for salvation, but, as they acquired a foothold and settled down as merchants, teachers and Rabbis, they also prepared the Age in their own particular way for the acceptance of the Messianic idea in the spirit of the Kabala. And where this did not happen, they impregnated western Jewry with their scholarship and their profound preoccupation with the Talmud and the Kabala and thus added to the reputation they already enjoyed. The Polish Jews represented the aristocracy of intellect as far as Jewish scholarship was concerned, and their co-religionists in western Europe preferred them to all others as teachers and students. True, their intelligence had proved a handicap to them in their former home, for it was prone to make them supercilious and haughty towards their non-Jewish neighbours. But whereas some people escape unpunished even for capital crimes, others have to pay with their lives merely for being unloved.

Thus events in Poland not only made the Jews who had survived conscious of an ever greater need of salvation for their people, but it also brought the hope and sorrow of their lot vividly to their minds by hundreds of living examples in their immediate environment and led them once more to seek spiritual guidance in the Talmud and the Kabala. For better, for worse, it forced them to isolate themselves, to shut themselves off from the lure of a world in which a Descartes and a Spinoza were trying to secure

greater freedom and self-consciousness for mankind. It threw them back once more on themselves and their longings, and as they always interpreted their faith historically, they called the Polish catastrophe the third *Churban*, that is, the third destruction of the Temple.

While the Jews were exploring this mystic line of thought along which exalted temperaments could grasp the idea of a Messiah, they had forced upon their notice the strange and gratifying fact that they were surrounded by a wealthy society of believers who were not Jews. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, one so-called Messiah after another had appeared among the Christians in Germany, France, Holland, England, and Poland. Among them we must include the Anabaptists of Münster. In 1534, Charles V had a Spaniard named Solomon Malcho burned to death for declaring that he was Christ and the Messiah. In 1550, Jacob Melstinski appeared in Poland and announced that he was Christ and chose twelve apostles. A few years later, again in Poland, two other men made a similar claim. In 1556, in Delft, David Jorries proclaimed himself to be the true Christ. Three years after his death his punishment was meted out to him. He was exhumed and burnt at the stake. In 1614, in Langensalza, Ezekiel Meth proclaimed himself the Grand Duke of God and the Archangel Michael. A year later Isaiah Stieffel announced: "I am the Christ, I am the living word of God." In 1624, at Oppenheim in the Palatinate, the secretary Philippus Ziegler prophesied that a Messiah of the line of David would be born in Holland. In 1648, Hans Keyl of Gerlingen declared that an angel of the Lord had appeared to him and told him that Württem-

berg would be devastated by the sword of the Turk and by plague and pestilence, and at about the same time Christina Regina Buderin was prophesying in Stuttgart.

In 1654 in England, an extraordinarily impressive figure appeared on the scene in the person of Jacob Naylor, the Quaker. While he was following the plough he heard a voice speaking the words the Bible tells us were addressed to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." This convinced him that he was the Messiah and he arrived in Bristol in October 1657, already escorted by a band of disciples. Two women were leading his horse and singing the old Jewish chant, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Israel." The examination to which the authorities then subjected him is full of echoes of the Bible. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" "Thou sayest. My kingdom is not of this world but of my Father." "Art thou the Lamb of God in whom lieth the hope of Israel?" "Were I not the Lamb of God I should not have sought you that ye might devour me. And the hope of Israel lieth in the justice of the Father, though it may be found by whomsoever chooseth to find it."

In this case the Messianic pretensions of a fanatic seem to have been inspired by the power radiating from the Jewish communities. It is not surprising to learn, therefore, that soon afterwards the Scandinavian, Oliger Pauli, declared that he had had a vision in which God commanded him to proclaim himself King of the Jews. In France, too, there were demonstrations supporting the Jewish idea of a Messiah, but Richelieu, who was a rationalist and dreaded mysticism, swiftly and ruthlessly si-

lenced them. But to show how full the air was of such ideas, we may quote the following letter from Augsburg. It was circulated at a time when nothing had yet happened and is dated September 24, 1642. "The ambassador resident in Constantinople reports that a Jewess has given birth to a new Messiah at Ossa in Turkey. He has won over numerous towns and castles as well as the whole of the land of Egypt and the province of Lower Syria. He has sent a sword to Don Sebe, King of Persia, hinting that he should abdicate and gracefully hand him over his kingdom. He has acted in the same way towards the Sultan and has summoned him to relinquish Jerusalem and Damascus. The Sultan has taken fright and has moved from Constantinople to Mecca. He calls himself Jesus Eli Messiah, the Almighty God of Heaven and Earth. He was born on September 24, 1641 in the village of Ossa near Bassiliske, of a Jewess named Gamaritta, who is said to be beautiful but quite common. When eight days later he was circumcised, he straightway began to speak and performed miracles and proclaimed himself the Messiah. On the day of his birth terrifying signs appeared in the sky; the sun was blotted out for eight hours at midday and a voice was heard over an area of a hundred miles crying, 'Repent, for today is the true Messiah born.' Many fiery dragons and many devils were seen in the air. He already looks like a man of twenty-four or twenty-five years of age. Nobody knows his father. He is a big man with a fine neck and shoulders, a long narrow head, a Turkish cast of countenance, a furrowed brow, terrifying eyes, long ears, and pointed teeth . . ." etc.

Such reports, although not often as fantastic as this, are

after all merely signs of the general interest shown by many of the spiritual representatives of the Age, if not in the Jews themselves, at least in the ideas of Judaism and its conception of ultimate salvation. We have already mentioned England and the Puritans. In London, in 1648, Edward Nicholas published a work which he dedicated to the English Parliament, *Apology for the Honourable Nation of the Yews*. In this book the author tries not only to strike a blow at the Papists, but quite seriously sets out to prove that the weal and woe of the nations of the world depends on the treatment they mete out to the Jews. For obviously God had made them survive all their misfortunes for some secret purpose of His own, and there could be no doubt that they would have a glorious future.

In France, a certain Isaac de Peyrère, a Huguenot in the service of the Duc de Condé, published a book entitled *Concerning the Return Home of the Jews*. He was convinced that the Diaspora was at an end and that the Jews would now return to the Holy Land. And as the King of France was the eldest son of the Church, it was he who should undertake to convey the oldest children of God, the children of Israel, back to their home. There was also Abraham von Frankenberg, a Silesian nobleman, a disciple of Jacob Böhme, who categorically declared that true light would come from the Jews, and that their time was at hand. In Danzig, a man named Johannes Mochinger, a member of an old Tyrolese noble family, was the leader of a religious circle which included among its mystic expectations the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and the revival of their national life, and gave eloquent expression to this belief. About this time a Dutchman, Heinrich Jesse, pub-

lished his book *Concerning the Coming Glory of Judah and Israel*, while the Bohemian mystic, Paulus Felgenhauer, although he did not actually believe in a worldly Messiah, communicated his religious convictions to the Jews in a pamphlet whose title reveals its contents: "Joyful tidings for Israel concerning the Messiah, to wit that the deliverance of Israel from all its tribulations and its liberation from captivity and the glorious advent of the Messiah are at hand, gathered for the comfort of Israel from the Holy Scriptures by a Christian who, like the Jews, is expecting the Messiah."

Certainly many theologians, philologists and historians were interested in the Jewish problem at this period. This was partly because it was the fashion for scholars to be polyhistorians and to study three classical languages, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, which enabled them to know something of the Talmud and of Rabbinical lore and thus to assume an authoritative attitude towards Jewish questions. Among them, for instance, were the Dutch Protestant theologian, Joseph Scaliger, "the King of Philologists," and Johannes Buxtorf the elder of Basle, an extremely learned Hebrew scholar. Nor must we forget Hugo Grotius and Johannes Selden, and last but not least, Christina of Sweden, the eccentric but talented daughter of Gustavus Adolphus. All these people felt called upon by the spirit of the Age to take an interest in Judaism, for in addition to the religious and mystical reasons for so doing, there was also the burning question of the readmission of the Jews into England.

Alike from the political, economic and religious point of view, the efforts made to achieve this end are particu-

larly interesting. The instigator of the movement was Manasseh ben Israel, a Rabbi of Amsterdam, extremely well read, eloquent, and enthusiastic, and a skilful compiler, who was held in high esteem even among non-Jewish scholars, and was accepted by them as the representative of intellectual Judaism. In his discussions with his learned friends, he was constantly being met by the argument that, although the Jewish power must eventually be restored, there were still two essential prerequisites to this end laid down by Holy Script that had not yet been fulfilled—the recovery of the ten tribes of Israel who had been led into captivity by Shalmaneser and the appearance of a Messiah who would give the signal for the return.

The fate of the ten tribes had obsessed the Jewish mind quite as profoundly as the expectation of a Messiah, for it was terrible to think that the major portion of a people whose destiny was eternal should have been led away in a day and have disappeared without leaving a trace and without anybody being able to give the smallest clue to their whereabouts. Eventually the imagination of a people tires of this gap in their ranks, and following up in their imaginations the faint traces that remained, the Jews discovered the mysterious river Sabbath which rushed headlong through unexplored regions in the wilds of Arabia, and thought that their ten lost tribes were somewhere on the other side of it, living under the rule of their great leader Moses, who had risen from the dead. He and the people were all waiting there for the advent of the Messiah. Until that day they were to remain hidden and no mortal could approach them, for the Sabbath was a raging torrent that none could cross. Six days in the week

it foamed along a gigantic, raging torrent, carrying great blocks of rock down with it and preventing any attempt at crossing. But on the seventh day, the Sabbath, the river lay silent and still from bank to bank, and if on that day any man chanced to cross he found on the opposite side a race of brown, dark-haired men armed with bows and arrows who killed the unwelcome stranger without mercy. But as soon as the advent of the Messiah was announced to them they would cross the river in the order of their tribes, each with its banner bearing the symbol of the tribe, over a hundred thousand heavily armed warriors, who would conquer the world for themselves and their God. It would not be a bloody conquest, for the other nations of the world would recognize their divine mission. Against one country alone—and here we find the cry of intolerable suffering becoming articulate in the mind of this people—against Germany alone would a real war be waged.

In addition to the theoretical discussions of the scholars, the memory of these ten tribes was kept alive by all manner of reports and unauthenticated accounts received from travellers. People suddenly turned up who had seen or heard something of the lost tribes, who, as it were, had beheld in a vision or in fancy what had long lain dormant in the mind of a whole people. One man declared that in the hinterland of Morocco there was a powerful army of eight hundred thousand Jews, who were marching on Arabia. Letters from Leghorn, based on news from Cairo, announced that the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were marching on Gaza and had almost reached the city, while the Marrano, Antonio de Montezinos, was able to give even more precise information. He

said he had witnessed what he described with his own eyes and could swear to the truth of what he reported in the year 1644 to Manasseh ben Israel when he took the name of Aaron Levi on his return to the fold of Judaism. He declared that on his travels he had gone as far as South America, where he made the acquaintance of an Indian mestizo named Francisco del Castillo who confided to him the secret that he knew where the ten tribes were to be found, or in any case where numbers of Jews were living hidden away in an inaccessible part of the country. At Levi's request, Castillo actually took him to a settlement of indigenous Jews who declared that they were descended from the tribe of Reuben. Their ancestors had been in the country even before the Indians, and they knew of the existence of two tribes of Joseph on an island in the vicinity.

Naturally legends circulate more readily than accurate information, for the former are met by faith and not by criticism. But Montezinos adhered to his story in spite of all attack and went to South America again to confirm and complete his report. On his death-bed he solemnly swore to the truth of his contentions.

Thus to Manasseh ben Israel and his friends the facts seemed to be beyond dispute, and Manasseh confidently used them in the argument of his treatise *Esperança de Israel* published in Amsterdam in 1650, which he sent to Oliver Cromwell in support of his plea that the Jews should be readmitted into England. These various reports and expectations of salvation combined with other arguments resulted in the following curious process of reasoning: According to the theory advanced by Manasseh himself, the ten tribes had been scattered as far as Tatory and

China, whence one or two groups or tribes had found their way to the continent of America. But as the remnants might be regarded as having been discovered, their return was a possibility, and if this were so the whole idea of salvation had entered the realm of practical politics. So England ran no risk in allowing the Jews to return to her shores, for in view of the proximity of the Messianic Age, they would stay there only for a very short period. Moreover—and this argument weighed most heavily with a man as pious as Oliver Cromwell—salvation could come only when the Diaspora was complete, and it could not be complete as long as Jews were refused admittance into England. Thus England would incur a heavy responsibility if by refusing she opposed the divine plan of salvation and postponed the completion of the Diaspora.

Manasseh did not live to see the success of his efforts; too many obstacles remained to be overcome in England. But it is certain that if only to relieve his conscience Cromwell not only allowed but unofficially encouraged the slow infiltration of Jews into his country and thus no longer laid himself open to the charge of preventing the salvation of the Jews.

Thus the expectations of the Jewish world received constant support from the public discussions of its Christian environment, which were undoubtedly based upon the advent of a Jewish Messiah. The only point of disagreement was connected with the nature of the Messiah himself. Those who believed in the Millennium regarded the advent of the Messiah and the return home of the Jews only as a temporary solution. During the Millennium the Jews would have an opportunity of acknowledging the true



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Messiah, namely Christ, who would also appear again in the Fifth Monarchy. Others who were less certain of such a conversion of the Jews hoped that an agreement would be reached between the Jewish and the Christian Messiahs. Cromwell, an eminently practical saint, expected that during the Fifth Monarchy, the Jews would embrace Christianity in a mass.

Manasseh ben Israel, in his treatise, *The Precious Stone*, sweeps aside all these ideas of a restricted Messianic kingdom in favour of the Jewish conception—the four kingdoms typified by the Four Beasts of the Apocalypse had already appeared and fulfilled their destiny, namely the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek and the Roman Empires. Therefore the Fifth Empire must be that of the Jews.

Enough of all this had reached the masses to make them feel that their religious hopes and expectations need no longer be concealed. Whereas hitherto their strange and essentially hostile environment had been opposed to all their impulses and utterances, they now suddenly found every one in miraculous agreement with them, encouraging and promoting their spiritual hopes. The part played by the non-Jewish population in preparing the Jewish world for what had happened and was still to come can hardly be overestimated. Unless we understand this we shall not be able to grasp the full significance of the events about to be related, at least not in so far as the Occidental Jews are concerned.

For in western Europe there was at that time in existence an institution which seemed to have been permanently established for the last hundred and fifty years and

to which people were growing accustomed, but which the Jews quite logically regarded as confirming the general trend of events, that is, the Spanish Inquisition and its attendant Marranism. Spanish Catholicism held simple, almost primitive views regarding the propagation and triumph of the true faith, and its methods differed from those adopted by its Mohammedan predecessors for the spread of Islam in Spain only in their greater intricacy and the far greater cruelty of their application. Even from the historical point of view the Inquisition was a psychical phenomenon. With all the panoply of ecclesiastic law and dogma it used the commandments, "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," to vilify and exterminate people of other faiths. The method of propaganda was to give the victim the choice between the water of baptism and the fire of the stake, and between these two extremes a subtle system of spiritual and bodily torture had been developed. The Jews who fell victims to this religious and intellectual attitude in Spain, where they had once been a flourishing community, opposed this psychological phenomenon by another. All who escaped exile and death by torture or at the stake were baptized either compulsorily or voluntarily, and outwardly, at least, punctiliously observed the forms of the new religion (not the new faith) though inwardly their fidelity to Judaism remained unshaken. They led a double life, with the suspicious eyes of the Inquisitors ever upon them, and constantly threatened by exposure and death in the secret exercise of their traditional religious practices and the furtive celebration of their national festivals.

This infused such intense vitality into their subterranean existence that the attitude of mind engendered thereby extended beyond their own lifetime to their descendants, with the result that their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren were born with this dualism in their blood, and like caged animals watching behind their prison bars eagerly seized the opportunity when supervision was for a moment relaxed to escape into the freedom of foreign lands where, with the weight of a hundred years lifted from their hearts, they could at last breathe freely once more and profess their ancestral creed. The Courts of the Inquisition were constantly filled, even in this Age, with prisoners charged with Marranism, the secret practice of the Jewish faith, and convicted. Day after day the stake devoured Jews whose baptism had led to no change of heart. There were solemn *autos-da-fé*, and Marranos were burnt in Cuenca, Granada, San Iago de Compostella, Cordoba, Lisbon, Valladolid, and Lima. The Inquisition was seriously alarmed by the fact that as late as the middle of the seventeenth century Jewish converts of long standing continued to break away from the new religion. A contemporary writer sums up the situation very clearly: "There are in Spain and Portugal both monasteries and convents full of Jews, not a few of whom conceal Judaism in their hearts and for the sake of this world's goods pretend to believe in Christianity. Some of them suffer from pangs of conscience and escape when they find an opportunity. In Amsterdam and many other districts there are Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Dominicans who are Jews, while in Spain there are Bishops and

fervent monks whose parents and relatives live here and in other towns in order to be allowed to profess the Jewish faith."

As there was constant communication both private and commercial between the Iberian peninsula and the Netherlands at this time, the news of the burning of Marranos, or Jewish Catholics, travelled and spread quickly. In the latter country, where they enjoyed exceptional spiritual and material freedom, the Jews sought refuge at the very beginning of the general dispersion from Spain in the year 1492 (when the world was enlarged by the discovery of America) and it was thither that most of the Marranos who had escaped from religious bondage fled. Here the refugees attempted, some timidly, others with fiery zeal, to return to the forms of their ancient faith and to restore the old Hebrew tongue. And yet with a mastery of a foreign language of which we can have but little conception, they also wrote lyrics and dirges of such consummate versatility and power in Spanish that the Hispano-Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam might well have founded a Spanish literary academy there. This environment in which, after untold suffering and danger, large numbers of Jews at last found a home and freedom, naturally provided a soil extremely favourable for the growth of the Jewish idea of salvation, and this attitude of expectation together with the personal experiences of the Marranos made a profound impression on the rest of the Jewish world. As had been the case with the Polish Jews, this Jewish colony in the Netherlands were eager to live and die for the sake of the Holy Name, and further trials in Spain served only to feed their imagination and foster their hopes.

As late as 1632, under Philip IV, the Inquisition had held many important trials, particularly in Valladolid. In 1639, sixty-three Marranos were charged at Lima, seventeen of whom were burnt at the stake, among them Dr. Franzisco Maldonadda Silva, whose fate caused a great sensation. He had had the daring publicly to proclaim his adherence to the Jewish faith and to preach it, and, having called himself Eli Nazareno, lived the life of the ancient Essenes. He spent fourteen years in prison, during which period the Inquisitors had endless discussions with him and tried to break his spirit and bring him to reason. In the end they abandoned their efforts and burnt him at the stake.

But an even greater sensation was created by the fate of Isaac de Castro-Tartas, a young Marrano who had escaped with his parents to Amsterdam and made up his mind to inaugurate a movement for bringing back the Marranos to the fold of Judaism. With this object in view he tried to get to Brazil, but was recognized in Bahia, arrested and taken to Lisbon, where he was arraigned before the Court of the Inquisition, condemned and burnt at the stake. While the flames were roaring about him, he shouted aloud his profession of faith to the world: "Hear, O Israel!" and it was said the world turned pale and trembled. Even Christians were staggered by such a proof of faith. We are also told of a certain Don Lupe de Vera y Alarcon, a young Spaniard of noble descent, whom the study of the Hebrew language and the examples in his environment led to be converted to Judaism. He was cast into prison and till the very moment when he was led to the stake the authorities were obliged to gag him as they could not endure the per-

tinacity with which he kept constantly repeating the Name of Jehovah.

- The combination of all these circumstances, the spiritual and material upheavals, the attitude of the Age, and contemporary events, whether inevitable or accidental, latent tendencies and everyday happenings, conduced to make the Jews ready and eager for the appearance of one who with self-confident assurance would offer himself to them as the fulfiller of their destiny. A whole Age and a man were on the point of becoming ripe for one another.

CHAPTER VI

The Prophet and the Harlot

His banishment from Constantinople, which had placed him in possession of Jachini's invaluable document, emboldened Sabbatai to make a new venture. In spite of the ban upon him and the hostility awaiting him, he made up his mind to return to Ismir. He was convinced that the authorities would not put him to death, for reports from friends for some time past had satisfied him that the circle of his adherents and of those who believed him to be the Messiah had grown considerably. Thus he was running no risks and it was imperative for him to find out for himself what progress had been made and on what support he could rely. ✓

In making his plans he had come to the conclusion that there were two places where he might meet with success and make his final proclamation—Jerusalem and his native city of Ismir. But he did not dare to go to Jerusalem for the ground was not yet ready, while he was forced to confess that although his band of supporters had certainly increased in Ismir he was still confronted by a high wall of silence and hostility there. Nevertheless nobody seemed to draw the logical conclusion from the fact that he had been placed under a ban, and this in itself was a sign of important progress and encouraged him to stay in Ismir for

a few months. Thither he accordingly repaired and, surrounded by his friends, spent his time in study and in describing what he had seen and done. He showed them Jachini's ancient document, heard and circulated all the news which, as a great trading centre, Ismir was constantly receiving, and maintained a temporizing attitude. Eventually, however, he was forced to recognize that the place was not yet ready for a great manifestation and that he was wasting his efforts by remaining there. Moreover, the free and easy independence of a roving life attracted him. In Ismir nobody even raised a finger against him or did anything to give him a fresh impetus and confirm him in his calling. So he took his departure, amply provided with funds by his father and brothers and once more resumed his wanderings.

Some of the stages of his journey deserve special notice, because of the events that occurred at them and the detailed accounts that have survived. Sabbatai had already become a conspicuous figure. In their doubly isolated position off the main trade routes of the great world, what topics of conversation had the Oriental Jews except those provided by the exceptional men who happened to pass through their communities? At least they knew that this man, Sabbatai Zevi, was a great Chacham and a well-known exponent and student of the Kabala. He had once also actually uttered the Shem ha'mforash and the great Cherem had been pronounced against him. In Salonica he had celebrated his nuptials with the Thora, the daughter of God, while in Constantinople an important and mysterious old document had been unearthed which he kept in his possession, but the contents of which he took care never

to divulge. In addition to all this, when he entered the various towns and penetrated into the Jewish quarters, his personal appearance made a profound impression on the people. A certain historian named Abraham Cuenqui described him as follows: "He was tall as a cedar of Lebanon, his fresh, brown-complexioned face framed by a black beard radiated beauty, and with his princely garments and proud bearing he was a magnificent figure to behold." Thus he appeared in Hebron, where he taught and interpreted the Scriptures and, with his ultimate object always in view, collected adherents, impressing the people by the fanatical devotion with which he prayed every night at the caves of Machpelah, the historic burying place of the great Patriarchs. Everywhere he went people felt that he was an extraordinary man.

Then about the year 1660 Sabbatai appeared in Cairo. Here he found or more probably sought a man who enjoyed a great reputation among Oriental Jews and was in every way typical of the Age, Raphael Joseph Chelebi. He was the official representative of Egyptian Judaism and by profession *Zaraf bashi*, or Master of the Mint and farmer of taxes at the court of the Turkish Governor. He was immensely wealthy and his establishment was conducted with true Oriental splendour. When he appeared in public he wore the gorgeous attire in keeping with his lofty and exalted position. But all this was mere surface show, for his intimate friends knew that beneath his stately garments he wore a hair shirt, the garb of the penitent. They also knew that he himself enjoyed none of the luxuries of his household but led an ascetic life. He fasted, mortified the flesh and performed the most rigorous peni-

tential exercises prescribed by the practical Kabala, and to guide and direct him in so doing he engaged a famous Kabbalist, Samuel Vital, the son of the well-known Chaim Vital Calabrese of Safed. His generosity to his co-religionists knew no bounds and to make sure of doing well in the sight of God, even when no opportunity to perform good deeds was at hand, he provided constant hospitality under his roof and at his board for fifty Talmud scholars and Kabbalists. He did all this not by way of penance for any personal sin or because he wished to win salvation for himself. He belonged to the large body of people who at that time had found a path to mysticism through the physical and spiritual suffering of their race, who confined their penitential exercises to a wrestling with God for the salvation of the world and cared nothing for personal power, influence and riches. Their real life was lived outside their office—it was thus that Chelebi lived—surrounded by a circle of adherents who agreed with their point of view and were animated by an intense longing for the “end of time”—Jewish Tolstoys free from problems and world weariness.

The whole-hearted devotion with which they welcomed Sabbatai fulfilled his most sanguine expectations. Chelebi surrendered with such childlike faith to the guidance of this man who was much younger than himself that Sabbatai had no hesitation in openly revealing himself to him, and thus secured a faithful, blindly devoted and wealthy supporter who subsequently did much to smooth his path. Sabbatai remained nearly two years in his house, during which period Chelebi's supporters, who now made Sabbatai their focus, sent constant reports into the outside

world. Though as yet they breathed no word of a Messiah and certainly did not refer to Sabbatai Zevi in that capacity, they prepared the way with such thoroughness that gradually Sabbatai became the centre of an interest which in due course would allow of almost infinite expansion. But for his final venture he still lacked the firm foundation of popularity without which no leader or Messiah is ever accepted by the masses. And in order to win that popularity Sabbatai at last made up his mind to move the scene of his activities to the place which he had hitherto avoided—Jerusalem. The eyes of the world in which he hoped to achieve his end were focused on that city, and he felt that he might now venture to make it his headquarters.

On his way thither he passed through the town of Gaza. Here fate placed in his hands a gift for which he could hardly have dared to hope in his wildest dreams and which proved the turning-point in his life—he found a prophet to announce the advent of the Messiah.

In this city lived a certain Nathan Benjamin Levi, also known as Nathan Ashkenazi after his father's native country, Germany. Subsequently he became known all over the world by the name of his own birthplace, Gaza, as Nathan Ghazati. His father was busy in Europe collecting alms for the community in Jerusalem, and all that he could do for his son's education was to send him to Jerusalem to study, that is to say, learn the Talmud and the Kabala. Like the majority of Jews in Jerusalem, he lived on charity, but as he was clever and had an impressive style both in speaking and writing, his famous teacher, the Rabbi Jacob Chagis, confided him to the care of the

wealthy Samuel Lisbona in Gaza. The latter did what was generally done in those days in the case of a man of promise, even if he was as poor as a church mouse—he gave him his daughter in marriage. She was said to be extremely beautiful, though she was blind in one eye; and Lisbona made such generous provision for his son-in-law that the latter was able to continue his studies without anxiety.

Nathan Ghazati might be called a worldly scholar, a happy contented young man, full of the joy of life. His exhaustive study of the practical Kabala did not unbalance him. But suddenly, before he reached his twentieth year, his attitude changed. He began seriously to take to heart the precepts which hitherto he had learnt and taught only theoretically, and started putting them into practice. He became grave and reserved, taciturn and retiring, began to do penitential exercises and mortify the flesh, and occasionally, in the circle of his pupils and other scholars, he would make statements on matters about which, as far as they could tell, he could not possibly know anything, but which subsequent investigation proved to be true. Thus he came to be regarded as possessing special occult powers and was accordingly held in peculiar reverence. Very soon, a man's name had only to be written on a slip of paper, for him to be able to describe his life and all the good and evil he had done.

In his role of clairvoyant he attracted large numbers of people from far and wide. Lists of names were submitted to him, against each of which he was asked to write the particular sin the bearer of it had committed and the penance he should undergo. Once, to test him, the names of a dead man and a new-born baby were written down, and

against the dead man's name he wrote, "Death hath redeemed him," and against the baby's, "He is free from sin."

These were supernatural gifts which inspired faith in the masses and suspicion among the scholars, and led to a commission of five Rabbis being sent from Jerusalem to investigate his claims. We do not know the result of this investigation, but the mass of legend that grew up about his name proves that the conclusion could not have been unsatisfactory. A popular anecdote seems to be connected with this Rabbinical inquiry. It relates that a great scholar came to him from Jerusalem in order to investigate his powers. Nathan Ghazati told him to go to the cemetery, where he would find an old man with a skin about his loins and a vessel of water in his hand. "Take the water," he said, "pour it over his hands and say: 'Forgive the children of Israel!'" The scholar went to the cemetery but found nobody. "There is nobody there," he said on his return. "Go again," replied Nathan. This time the scholar found an old man answering to the description he had been given, and he did what Nathan had told him to do. Whereupon the old man lifted up his voice and said: "My blood be forgiven thee!" On returning home the scholar learnt that the old man was the prophet Zechariah whom the Jews had killed and that by this symbolic act among the tombstones his blood had been washed away and the sin against him forgiven.

But these dramatic displays of second sight were apparently merely preparatory to a more forcible appeal to the spirit of the Age and the belief in a Messiah. Nathan's father, who travelled all over the world, kept him very

well informed of all that was happening. He knew all about Sabbatai Zevi and followed every stage of his wanderings and every detail of his activities. He even knew about Jachini's ancient document and perhaps actually possessed a copy of it, for in later years Sabbatai Zevi declared under oath before the Rabbis of Adrianople that Nathan had persuaded him to proclaim himself the Messiah by means of an ancient document in which his, Sabbatai's, name had been interpolated. If we judge Sabbatai aright we may conclude that Nathan actually did possess such a manuscript.

In the case of Nathan also, the spirit of the Age, contemporary events, and his own disposition probably combined to urge him to concentrate all his efforts on the Messianic idea. He insistently preached the necessity for repentance and reminded all who came to him or wrote for his advice that the advent of the Messiah was at hand. And he repeated this so often and with such eloquence and conviction, that he created around him an atmosphere of the most tense expectation. All he said and did was immediately believed, exaggerated, distorted, and circulated as truth, embellished with all the fantastic features of the miraculous and the legendary. In time, his sayings and prophecies circulated throughout the East and reached western Europe; we find them reproduced in contemporary reports in some such form as the following communication from Parson Buchenroedern: "Letters from Jews in Alexandria report that a prophet has appeared in Gaza who is twenty-six years of age and does all manner of signs and wonders. He calls upon the Jews to repent for the coming of the Messiah, and tells them that they

must gather together before Jerusalem. This they did, and when several thousands of them were collected outside the city oil poured out of a cloud above them on to the head of the Messiah, and a voice was heard saying: 'This is the Messiah who will rid Israel of its enemies and will gather its people together from the ends of the earth and restore the worship of God.' The Messiah's name is said to be Benhadad and his age about forty. At about the same time a cloud of fire was seen over Mount Zion in Jerusalem, whereupon the prophet wrote to all the Jews all over the world to gather together and come to Jerusalem and he would show them where the Ark of the Covenant was to be found and all the other things which Jeremiah had hidden (as we are told in II Maccabees 2). On that day an altar would come down from Heaven on which the Jews would lay a sacrifice which would be lighted by fire from the sky and burned up, and thus divine worship would be restored as of old and endure to the end of the world. Meanwhile, he has told the Jews to perform proper penitential exercises and diligently to read the Prophet Jeremiah. At the appointed hour the Turks and the heathen would come forward of their own accord and deliver up their empires to the new Messiah. They also say that at the same time the prophet Nathan blew the horn which was regarded as a good sign. The rest was to happen within two months' time. Meanwhile, some of the Jews are still in doubt concerning the truth of the matter, since no letters have yet reached them from Jerusalem and other places in the neighbourhood. But others believe everything implicitly. Thus it is positively asserted that the Jews have marched out in vast numbers towards Aleppo, to wage war

on the King of the Moors, but with the assistance of large bodies of Turks the people of Aleppo sallied forth fifty-one thousand strong, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Jews. Now all we hear is that the Jews are selling their houses and preparing to depart."

Reports and fantastic accounts of this kind nevertheless unconsciously anticipated at least some of the events that subsequently occurred and were quite in keeping with a state of unusual exaltation. Once, about the time of the Jewish Pentecost, Nathan Ghazati summoned the scholars of the town to him and searched the Scriptures until far into the night. Towards midnight he was seized with an overpowering desire to sleep and to overcome it he walked up and down the room muttering prayers. But his weariness only increased and he found it more and more difficult to shake it off. He then asked one of his friends to sing him a song, and when he had finished he asked another to do likewise. But still his weariness was not relieved. Gradually it developed into a state of distressing feebleness; he seemed alarmed and bewildered and began to stagger round the room, helplessly clutching at his clothes. His friends looked on terrified and suddenly saw him lose his balance and fall to the floor. They dashed to him and tried to help him up but found to their horror that he was lying stiff and still with his eyes closed.

They called in a physician, who after a brief examination declared Nathan to be dead. So they spread a shroud over him, and broken-hearted and distraught squatted in the corners of the room. After a while they heard a deep hollow voice struggling to pronounce a few words. Terrified, they tore the shroud from Nathan and listened. They



Waar afbeeldinge van den genaemde propheet
Nathan Levi van Gaza.

Vray portraict du dit prophete
Nathan Levi de Gaza.

NATHAN GHAZATI

could hear him speaking but his lips did not move and the words he was uttering seemed to be laboriously fighting their way from his subconscious mind. He spoke of the advent of the Messiah and of his prophet, and his soul stammered forth glad tidings of salvation. Then as the words and the sounds died away, a deep quivering breath came from the stiff body, his breast heaved and, with a deep sigh of relief, he opened his eyes. They helped him to get up and besieged him with questions. What was the matter with him? But he could remember nothing. They told him what had happened; but, sad and absent-minded, he remained silent.

Shortly afterwards news arrived that Sabbatai Zevi would stop in Gaza on his way from Cairo to Jerusalem. Great interest was aroused by the prospect of this visit, but Nathan felt something deeper than interest. All the hopes he had concentrated on this man were revived and to crown all he received about this time a letter from Isaac Levi in Salonica telling him that Sabbatai Zevi had secretly revealed himself to him as the appointed Messiah.

From that moment Nathan Ghazati ceased to be agitated and uneasy. All his groping expectations and premonitions, all the promptings of his unconscious mind and his vague hopes had suddenly been given a direction and a goal. Every fibre of his being was now concentrated on the mission to which his every word, impulse and thought was devoted until his dying day. His one obsession was to be the herald and forerunner of the man of the future, the Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi, to serve him and help him, to bear witness to him, to be his prophet and

chattel, to suffer for him if need be, or sit on the steps of his throne if that were possible.

He accordingly made immediate preparations for a great reception. Without telling his friends and fellow-students the real reason, or revealing what he knew, he persuaded them to show special honour to the expected guest. They eagerly listened to him and a luxurious banquet was prepared. At the head of the table there was a raised chair resembling a throne for the guest, and, worked into the decorations, were insignia of quasi-royal design. The banquet was a brilliant function accompanied by general rejoicing. When the meal was ended and the guest, according to custom, was to be toasted and have speeches made in his honour, the company, almost as though it had been arranged beforehand, handed the goblet of wine to the youngest but most worthy among them—Nathan Ghazati. With trembling hands he raised it aloft, held it out towards the guest, and the words and blessing he uttered irrevocably ushered in the Sabbataian movement: "*Baruch habah bashem adonai*. . . . Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. May the merciful God bless our King, Sabbatai Zevi!"

There was great excitement at the head of the table and Sabbatai sprang to his feet with such violence that the vessels rang. "Silence!" he roared, pointing at Nathan Ghazati. The latter put down the goblet and said no more, and Sabbatai went slowly out of the room.

What did this signify? Was it one last grand gesture of modesty, a final protest against the utterance of a bare fact, an attempt to conceal his call? Was it genuine diffidence that was forcing him to shrink from the pompous

title that was offered him? Was he perhaps afraid of assuming an office entailing multifarious duties and obligations, or was it merely a skilful move on his part which would one day enable him to say, "It was not I who desired it; you yourselves called me and forced the office upon me. The responsibility therefore lies with you, not with me!" And later on, at certain moments in his life, Sabbatai did, in fact, adopt this attitude. But at the time his passionate gesture of protest did not prevent him from keeping in very close touch with Nathan Ghazati and making unscrupulous use of his subsequent activities in preparing the way for his Messiahship. And when he set out for Jerusalem the two parted like friends closely bound by a common belief.

He made a prolonged stay in Jerusalem—about three years—although the results he obtained were altogether incommensurate with the time spent. For how could he hope to make any impression there and what was his object in staying? True, from the standpoint of religious sentiment, Jerusalem was an extremely important city, but it had become impoverished and now exercised but little influence on the rest of the Jewish world. The subscriptions raised by the Jews on behalf of the victims of the Polish catastrophe had been so heavy that there had been a serious decrease in the alms sent to Jerusalem, with the result that the poor were on the verge of starvation. Famine had broken out and forced many of the inhabitants to leave the city and seek refuge elsewhere. Moreover, the Turkish authorities were making unusually heavy demands on the community and threatened reprisals if payment were not forthcoming.

This also contributed towards the depopulation of the city. In the end only those remained who had not the means to move, or whose mastery of the practical Kabala enabled them to reduce their requirements to a minimum; while as for the scholars and Rabbis of the city, they had very little authority among the Oriental Jews.

Yet it was in this environment that Sabbatai calmly spent three precious years of his life. He was forced to do so and made a virtue of necessity. He had good reasons for his sojourn. The Zohar had prophesied that the year of salvation would be 1648, but 1648 had come and gone and nothing had happened! All Sabbatai's efforts had ended in smoke. And with a grandiose gesture he drew the logical conclusion. As the Jewish prophecies had not been fulfilled, he must turn to the Christian ones. If the year 1648 had failed, the year 1666, which the Christians regarded as the apocalyptic year, might nevertheless bring the fulfilment of the prophecies. Sabbatai's most memorable feat consists in having insinuated this year into Jewish mysticism and led the masses to regard it as the year of redemption for the Jews, and to have done so with such conviction that no one was given the chance of asking why one year had been substituted for another or why and how it had been possible for this to be done. Sabbatai insisted that 1666 was the year and carried his point. His whole energy was now concentrated on preparing the way and it was soon to be seen how brilliantly his plan was conceived.

Thus he bided his time in Jerusalem and based his popularity on the support of the poor. Once again he was munificently financed by his brothers and his life presented a strange contrast of magnificence and saintly piety which

he loved to exhibit openly and free from all restraint in public. He would engage in spiritual devotions for hours at a time at the tombs sacred to the men of old, praying, singing and shedding burning tears. There was nothing disreputable in this spiritual exhibitionism; it was sincere and welled up from the deepest recesses of his being. He lived in his deeds. His displays were expressions of his personality and in addition to the reputation for sanctity he won thereby, he acquired further popularity by taking notice of the children everywhere he went and giving them money and sweets. So the mothers adored him and the women loved him because he not only sang hymns and canticles but also songs full of secret eroticism, and when he was asked to explain their meaning he gave them a mystic interpretation. Among them there was in particular the following Spanish love song which has been handed down to us by Pastor Coenen in a Dutch version:—“*Op klimmende op een bergh, en nederdalende in een valeye, ontmoette ick Melisselde, de Dochter van den Kayser, dewelcke quam uyt de banye, van haer te wasschen. Haer aengesichte was blinckende als een deegen, haer ooghleden als een stalen boege, haer lippen als coraelen, haer vleesch als melck, etc.*” It is a pity that Coenen concludes with this “etc.” . . . In any case, the women believed the song bore some relation to the Talmud and the Song of Solomon.

A certain obvious visionary named Baruch Gad proved of great assistance to Sabbatai in preparing people for coming events by means of a mysterious tale he had to tell. He was a collector of alms for Jerusalem, and travelled through Persia in connexion with his work. He happened to return just about this time and described the extraordi-

nary predicaments he had been in, from which a Jew belonging to the lost tribe of Naphtali had rescued him. This Jew had handed him a document purporting to have been written by the Jews on the other side of the River Sabbatation, in which, in Kabalistic terminology, it was stated that the ten tribes were only awaiting the appearance of the Messiah in order to sally forth in their thousands. It was regarded as genuine and copies of it were made and sent after those who bore the glad tidings to facilitate their efforts.

But what finally established Sabbatai's popularity and quite rightly confirmed it was the following incident. The Governor of Jerusalem had again laid heavy financial burdens upon the impoverished Jewish community, and as they could not pay, he threatened to banish all the Jews. In their distress they appealed to Sabbatai Zevi and asked whether he could not use his influence to help them. Sabbatai promised to do so. He knew where to turn, and immediately set out for Cairo where he laid his request before his friend Chelebi. Without a moment's hesitation, Chelebi placed the whole of the substantial sum at Sabbatai's disposal. But Sabbatai took all the credit. When he returned he was hailed by the people as their saviour and the word rose for the first time spontaneously from their lips. It was said of him, "*Halak shaliak u'ba mashiak*"—"He went forth an ambassador and returned a saviour!"

But this journey was also fateful in another way. For he returned from Cairo married for the third time. In Jewry of that day, this was important only because marriage constituted one of the most obvious religious duties. The woman, the partner in the ceremony, was of no ac-

count. She was a good or a bad housekeeper, that was all. The intimate duties of family life, the observance of the ritualistic law and the bearing of children constituted her sole functions and importance. But people imagined that it could be no ordinary woman who was destined to be the bride of the extraordinary man, Sabbatai Zevi, whose two marriages had both been annulled. And Fate did not fail him, for his third wife came into his life in the strangest manner.

Sarah, the woman in question, was a native of Poland. Who her parents were nobody ever knew. All that is certain about them is that they died when Sarah was about six years old, after which she was shut up in a convent. She was probably picked up as a foundling after her parents had been killed in a pogrom. Another theory, probably invented for a special purpose, was that she had been kidnapped and taken to a convent and that her parents had died of sorrow, because they were unable to recover their child. Be this as it may, her earliest childhood memories were tumultuous and stormy and indelibly imprinted on her mind, more especially, as being an Oriental Jewess, she could not have failed to be impressed from her tenderest years by lively recollections of her environment and an early education concerned with the practical exercise of religion. For such a child suddenly to be taken to a Polish convent and delivered up to its atmosphere must have had a profound influence on her character. For ten years, that is to say, until she was fully mature, Sarah was surrounded by saints' images, candles, incense, hymns, and prayers repeated in the isolation of her cell or in the disastrous company of other nuns. At the end of that period

her nature must have been stamped for life with the virtues and vices of her environment.

One day when the Jews from a village in the neighbourhood of the convent went to their cemetery to bury one of their dead, they found among the graves an extremely beautiful girl in tattered clothes, who looked like a Jewess. Surprised by her appearance, they asked her whence she came and whither she wished to go. Sarah told them as much of her life story as she thought fit to reveal or, at least, as much of it as she knew. She may even have lied. Possibly she was as much influenced by Jewish as by Catholic mysticism. For she informed them that two nights previously her father's ghost had come to her and told her that he could find no peace in death, because he knew his daughter had embraced another faith. And he wept and wailed. She had asked him what she should do. "Flee from the convent!" he had replied: "Go to the Jewish cemetery hard by and sit among the graves. In two days' time some Jews will come to bury their dead, and they will help you to attain your goal." What goal? inquired the astonished Jews. But Sarah did not reply. She probably knew of no goal or wished to keep it secret. But she told them that she had jumped from the top-story window of the convent that very night. Her father had helped her to leap into the abyss by holding up her body and she showed the women what she declared to be the marks of her father's nails on her skin. The women saw and believed and took Sarah back with them to the village.

The discovery was at once disquieting and dangerous. For the girl, although a Jewess by birth, belonged to another faith, and one day, when the affair became known,

the convent would claim her back. So the Jews kept her presence among them a profound secret. She was hidden in one place after another, but through all these vicissitudes she remained calm, thoughtful, and beautiful.

Inquiries were set on foot and it was discovered that, when the community to which Sarah's parents belonged had been dispersed, one of her brothers, named Samuel, had escaped and drifted to Amsterdam, where he was making a living as a tobacco merchant. Anxious to be rid of their dangerous visitor Sarah's rescuers decided to send her to him, and taking all due precautions, they transferred her from community to community, until she had crossed the German frontier. Everywhere she went she was regarded as a mystery, and aroused considerable interest. It is impossible to say how long this journey with its endless stages lasted, for the records are singularly silent regarding the first days of her freedom, and all the more legendary accounts relate merely her previous history and the circumstances of her discovery. One story goes that she was kidnapped by a Polish nobleman who tried to persuade her to be baptized. Another describes her as living in a Christian family who destined her to be their son's wife. But in both cases her father's spirit appeared to her by night and saved her. A religious variation of these legends declares that at the time of her discovery in the cemetery she had a label on her bearing the words, "This woman will be the bride of the Messiah!"

The poetic hand of legend does not seem to have touched her later years and apparently a certain fear and timidity paralysed the natural eagerness of people to interest themselves in the extraordinary fate of this eccentric, extremely

erotic, and vital creature. Thus they were obliged to leave the field clear for the chroniclers, particularly to those who were hostile to the Sabbataian movement and who, full of suspicion, followed the track of this amazing and, from the Jewish standpoint, somewhat disconcerting young woman. These chroniclers state that Sarah did in fact live with her brother in Amsterdam, but having reached her destination after her adventurous journey, she was not content. In the ordinary course of events her brother would have arranged for her to marry some worthy Jew; but she proceeded to break loose once and for all from such a normal existence. As she had started life in an extraordinary manner, she continued to conduct it along extraordinary lines, declaring that a Messiah was coming into the world and that she was destined to be his bride. And deaf to all entreaties and persuasions, she set off on her wanderings round the world to discover the Messiah.

We are not told how she planned her wanderings, nor is it likely that she knew of Sabbatai Zevi and his whereabouts, for had she done so she would presumably have immediately turned eastward to meet him. Instead she wandered from Amsterdam through Holland, Germany, and Switzerland and eventually reached Italy. Everywhere her beauty excited wonder and determined her fate, while everybody felt the greatest interest in the destiny to which she felt herself called. But as though she already had royal gifts to bestow, she did not shrink back at the excitement she caused among the men she met, but picked out whomsoever she desired, recklessly giving herself to all who solicited her and meeting any man who made an appointment with her. Destined to be the bride of a holy man,

she lived the life of a harlot, although this did not in any way disturb the certainty and determination with which she pursued her goal. She did not remain long with any man, but with the sure instinct of the somnambulist wandered from place to place, despising those who insulted her, and explaining to those who marvelled at the strange incompatibility of her destiny and her way of life, that since she could not marry until the Messiah took her to him, God had authorized her to satisfy her passions how and where she could. Thus she contrived to give expression to all that lust and religiosity have in common in the depths of the human soul. Reports from Amsterdam, Frankfort, Mantua, and Leghorn describe her way of life and her claims to be the bride of the Messiah. Scholars and Rabbis came to her to examine the strange phenomenon she presented and the alarm caused among them by her beauty and her sensuous appeal is reminiscent of the witch-trials of the Middle Ages. Carried away by their faith and the spirit of the Age, they ascribed supernatural qualities to her, but unlike their medieval religious opponents, they did not make the inexplicable and mysterious an excuse for subjecting a fellow-creature to torture or breaking her on the wheel. For the Christian persecutors of witches hated Eros and stifled the weird sensations provoked by witches by putting them to death. The Jewish Rabbis and scholars were also afraid of Eros, but they tried to circumvent him by sublimating his influence. The former possessed a dogma and cut off the legs of all who did not fit their Procrustean bed, the latter were free from dogma but were dangerously susceptible to any religious appeal. Thus in the end all they gathered from this bril-

liant creature was that she wished to be the bride of the Messiah. But they could not help her, as no Messiah had so far appeared.

At this time Sabbatai's faithful follower, Pinheiro, was staying in Leghorn and immediately grasped the possibilities of the situation. Sabbatai was in Cairo begging for money from Chelebi to help the Jews in Jerusalem. Pinheiro sent him the news with as many details as he could gather. Whereupon, strange to relate, Sabbatai immediately declared that the girl was his predestined bride. He had been obliged to dissolve two marriages, because they lacked the confirmation of Heaven. But this time there could be no doubt. Sarah was certainly his predestined bride as the Messiah. Thus to the joy of his followers and the whole-hearted approval of Chelebi, he announced the fact, and Chelebi immediately sent a messenger and an escort to Leghorn to fetch Sarah to Cairo.

She received the messenger with regal calm and accompanied her escort without further ado. It is at this relatively innocent and romantic point that legend once more takes up the thread of the story. One version relates that, knowing nothing of Sabbatai's existence, she wandered to Cairo and to Chelebi, to whom she confided her history and her destiny. His friends, to whom he told the girl's tale, advised him to endow her and marry her. This he was quite ready to do, but Sarah resisted, declaring that the man she was to marry was at that moment in peril of his life on the high seas, but that her father's spirit would help him. Eleven days later Sabbatai Zevi arrived and his followers were able to describe the terrible dangers to which they had been exposed on the journey. Pirates had pursued the

ship, but in answer to Sabbatai's prayers, the Almighty dispersed them. According to another version Sarah told Chelebi that she must go to Jerusalem as her husband was there. Chelebi sent her there in charge of a reliable escort. On the outskirts of the city she met Sabbatai surrounded by his followers, and called out, "This wise man is my husband," and on seeing her Sabbatai replied, "This maiden is my bride."

Meanwhile, pending Sarah's arrival, Chelebi made preparations for the wedding with true Oriental pomp and ceremony, and did not attempt to hide the fact that these regal arrangements were being made for the Messiah. Chelebi's circle in Cairo regarded the wedding as an opportunity for publicly proclaiming his Messiahship to the whole world, and Sabbatai raised no objection. The year 1665 had just opened and the path leading to his ultimate revelation of himself had become extremely short. Once again Fate had contrived an extraordinary conjuncture of circumstances for him, and once again he accepted the coincidence in such a way as to give the onlooker the impression that the finger of God was at work.

Sabbatai had never expected to have a wife. Women played no part in his emotional and imaginative life. His spiritual and sensual needs were adequately satisfied in the sphere of mysticism. His twofold failure in the past pointed only to one conclusion and, as the sequel will show, he did not cohabit with Sarah either before or after marriage. In making the spontaneous declaration that this girl was destined to be his bride, he was moved neither by her beauty, her fate, nor her sensual appeal, but purely by her own declaration that she was the chosen bride of

the Messiah. Was he animated only by cold calculation? No! But he was incapable of regarding people and events except from the standpoint of their relationship to himself. He had long ceased to be anything but the slave of his idea, and it did not enter his head that it was necessary to prove that what happened, happened on his account. He did not bear the idea aloft with mastery; it had completely subjugated him and thus the human side of him remained fallow and virginal. He did not feel a spark of love for this woman. She was the Queen whom the Messiah, the King, must have, and this constituted her sole purpose and importance as far as he was concerned. Nor was he in the least perturbed when subsequently he discovered that Sarah was obviously a magnet to the young men about him, and that under the cloak of religion and with the airs of a queen of ancient days, she secretly pursued her old life with his youthful followers. Truth to tell, the two creatures who met in this way were bound by no sort of human tie; their destinies had made credulous liars of them both. Exceptional external events and their own peculiar personalities had brought them together, and they continued to live side by side for the rest of their lives.

Thus the marriage celebrated in Cairo was not the union of Sabbatai and Sarah, but of the Messiah and his Queen. Furtive attempts were made to enlighten him regarding the nature of her past life. Had he been concerned as a husband with such reports, he would have been bound to say that the woman of his choice must be a pure and spotless virgin; but as he regarded the matter only from the standpoint of his obsession, he replied that God had once

told the prophet Hosea to take a harlot to wife. He was trying to realize a great prophetic symbol in the flesh, but as he found it impossible to live up to the reply and make it a reality, his answer served only to add to his wife's degradation. However, he was not aware of this. All he was able consciously to grasp was that predestined events seemed to be bearing him along a further decisive stretch of road towards his goal. So he returned to Jerusalem via Gaza, where Nathan, the fulfiller of his destiny, was awaiting him.

The Blast of the Trumpet

NATHAN GHAZATI had not lost touch with Sabbatai Zevi, neither spiritually nor in any other way. He had understood his command to be silent at their first meeting, but could obey it only so long as his enthusiasm did not burst bounds and force him to speak. And recent events in the outside world no doubt explained his exceeding readiness to see visions and break out into prophecy. His immediate circle suspected that he was on the point of breaking out, for he had ceased searching the Scriptures for some time past.

On the 25th of Elul, 5425, which was a Sabbath Day in the late summer of the year 1665, Nathan Ghazati at last had a great vision. He saw the light which at the creation of the world had illumined the spheres and, like Ezekiel in his vision, he beheld fiery signs in the sky, and read word for word the following message: "And God said unto me, thy Saviour, Sabbatai Zevi, cometh!" And he saw the Messiah walking across the sky in the garb of an angel, and then he heard a mighty voice call out from the heights, a voice that was not of this world, saying, "In one year and a few moons from now there shall be manifested unto you and your eyes shall behold the kingdom of the Messiah that cometh of the line of David."

After his vision, his friends found him foaming at the mouth like a madman. When he had recovered, he could still see the vision clearly and remembered the words that had accompanied it, and told them everything. Nay more, he eagerly spread the news and swore by the living world that every word he said was true. And referring to Jachini's manuscript, he declared that he had read a similar prophecy in an old document of the year 5386, that is to say, the year of Sabbatai's birth, and from the irresponsible position of a clairvoyant he came out into the open and assumed the responsible role of one called to be the prophet of the Messiah.

And in this capacity he was more constant and faithful than the man whose advent he heralded.

He set to work at once, and wrote a circular letter addressed to no particular individual but to the "Brethren in Israel." With magic speed innumerable copies found their way all over the Jewish world and within a few weeks it was read in Salonica, Constantinople, Venice, Leghorn, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Frankfort, Paris, London, Posen, and Lemberg. It was like a trumpet blast amid the slumber of expectation:

"Hear ye, Brethren in Israel, that our Messiah is come to life in the city of Ismir and his name is Sabbatai Zevi. Soon he will show forth his kingdom to all and will take the royal crown from the head of the Sultan and place it on his own. Like a Canaanitish slave shall the King of the Turks walk behind him, for to Sabbatai is the power and the glory. But when nine months have passed, our Messiah shall vanish from before the eyes of Israel and no man shall be able to say whether he is alive or dead. But

he will cross the River Sabbathion which, as all men know, no mortal has ever crossed. There he will marry the daughter of Moses and our Messiah shall ride forth to Jerusalem with Moses and all the Jews of old mounted on horses. He himself shall ride on a dragon whose bridle rein shall be a snake with seven heads. On his way he will be attacked by Gog and Magog, the enemies of Israel, with a mighty army. But the Messiah shall not conquer his enemies with ordinary weapons made by men. Nay, with the breath of his nostril shall he rout them and by his word alone shall he utterly destroy them. And when he is entered into Jerusalem, God shall send down a temple of gold and precious stones from heaven, and it shall fill the city with its brilliance, and in it shall the Messiah offer up sacrifice as High Priest. And in that day shall the dead throughout the world rise from their graves. I hasten to tell you these tidings."

In this prophecy secular and religious Messianism were curiously intermingled in a way entirely in keeping with the spirit of the Age. But it is characteristic of the Jewish mind, so inured to suffering, that the act of redemption should be postponed as a matter of course. Without one last blow, one last crowning disaster, their salvation appeared unthinkable, a fact which Nathan could not sufficiently emphasize. A long and detailed message, which the prophet addressed to Chelebi in Cairo, has come down to us. In it he told him in terms similar to those used in the first circular, that the salvation of the world was at hand and how it would come, and dealt somewhat more exhaustively with Sabbatai's fourth marriage beyond the Sabbathion. Moses, who had risen from the dead, had a

daughter Rebecca, a girl of fourteen, whom God had chosen to be the true bride of the Messiah. Sabbatai Zevi would marry her, and Sarah, who was now called Queen, would become the slave of Moses' daughter. This was the only time he ever referred to Sarah in his manifestoes and communications, which seems to suggest that he was never able to overcome a certain dislike of her.

He then proceeded to describe to Chelebi the manifold sufferings the Messiah had undergone. "And that is why all Jews have been placed in his hand, that he may do with them as he will. Those whom he would condemn he will condemn; those whom he would exalt he will exalt. In a year and a few months he will wrest the empire from the Sultan of Turkey without striking a blow, but merely by singing hymns and songs of praise; and he will take the Turk with him wheresoever he goeth, invading all the countries of the world and conquering them, and all the kings thereof shall be the slaves of the Sultan, but the Sultan himself shall be *his* slave. And there shall be no shedding of blood among the Christians, save in Germany." Salvation, however, was not to come immediately, but only after the lapse of five years. Then only would Sabbatai cross the mystic river, and hand over the rule of a vastly improved world to the Grand Turk, bidding him leave the Jews in possession of their property. But three months later, at the instigation of his advisers, the Sultan would rise up against the Jews. There would be terrible suffering and misery throughout the world; the city of Gaza alone would escape and form the foundation of Sabbatai Zevi's kingdom. For Sabbatai loved that city as David loved the city of Hebron. And towards the end

of this period the miracles prophesied in the *Zohar* would occur. Then all who were still groaning beneath the yoke would be set free and all who had performed special services for the Holy Land would rise from the dead. Only forty years later would all the dead rise from their graves.

Nathan had a twofold object in making this communication, which was also circulated by the thousand all over the world, extremely detailed and circumstantial. After the first spontaneous announcement, it was necessary, in order that coming events might be made known and emphasized, to follow it up by further explanation. Moreover, this letter was Nathan's reply to a question from Chelebi, asking for details of the reports that had reached him about Sabbatai and his activities in Jerusalem, which to a Jew appeared somewhat disconcerting and terrifying.

For Sabbatai, with his Queen, had entered Jerusalem, where he had allowed himself to be acclaimed as Saviour of the Holy City. He had taken Nathan's public announcement quite naturally as a matter of course, and made no sign of protest when his followers and the poor, who clung round him as their liberator and apostle, hailed him as King and Messiah as he made his public entry. He had already been behaving in an extremely autocratic way. Chelebi had given him 4000 thalers for the poor of the city, and the Rabbis laid claim to the money and declared that they ought to distribute it according to the usual scale. Sabbatai took no notice of this but gave away the money as he thought fit and, needless to say, thought of his own followers and friends first of all. The Rabbis were furious and threatened him with a ban; but by this time Sabbatai's position was so firmly established that he no longer cared

for such threats. He did as he chose, and his friends, including Chelebi, took it as a matter of course that he should do so. But something else was giving them cause for depression and alarm—Sabbatai, that model of piety, was beginning to contemn and infringe the Law, and was behaving as though its precepts had not remained sacred and inviolable for over a thousand years. He no longer adhered to the recognized hours and forms of prayer. He performed his own orisons when and how he chose, and disregarded all the regulations relating to vestments and clothes, feast days and dietary laws, which in the eyes of his friends constituted a crime so terrible that they were at a loss to understand.

They were inclined to think that such blasphemous conduct could not possibly have originated in his own brain and will, for a new figure had suddenly appeared at his side, a man whose origin and aims were shrouded in mystery—Samuel Primo. The Messiah referred to him as his secretary, an appellation in which the fellow himself concurred. But it was obviously merely a cloak for concealing the relationship of master and slave. Sabbatai could now no longer lift a finger without the approval of his secretary Primo. Not that he asked for his advice and followed it. No! Primo would have an idea and lay it before Sabbatai who would then proceed publicly to put it into action, and his thoughts and utterances went beyond the narrow circle of his friends and reached the outside world only when Primo had put them into words that he considered fit and desirable. Sabbatai could speak freely only to his own immediate circle, everything beyond that was perforce subjected to Primo's editorship and supervision. Never-

theless, Primo never obtruded himself, and even when he was making the Messiah dance like a marionette on strings he remained silent and invisible in the background.

Primo held this office as long as Sabbatai himself continued to play the part of Messiah. He knew much better than his master what was necessary for consolidating his position and was also aware of the weak points in the latter's self-justification and way of life, and concealed and covered them up. He was constantly discovering fresh means for justifying Sabbatai's claim to be the Messiah. His instinct very rightly told him that an exceptional man is entitled to behave in an exceptional manner and that the masses who were called upon to believe in him would be far more deeply impressed by innovations that gave offence than by obedience to tradition and the common rules of conduct. He believed in the Messiah, but regarded Sabbatai as weak, and served the idea by making himself the servant of its exponent. But in this capacity it was imperative for him to keep the Messiah under his thumb.

Primo was the first to draw the logical conclusion from all that had happened. Whereas Sabbatai was concerned only with himself and his own influence, Primo saw that Judaism was standing at the cross-roads and that some momentous achievement must be attempted in the religious sphere. He perceived that the whole of Rabbinical Judaism in the form in which it had developed was merely the result of the state of distress chiefly due to the Diaspora, and that all its edicts and prohibitions were justified only by this temporary state of affairs. They did not emanate from God. The Jewish people had erected this complicated system of defence about the Law of God for fear they

might lose it altogether, separated as they were from their own country, their Temple, and their national traditions, and living among people whose civilization and faith were different from their own. He also saw that this Rabbinical Judaism had developed into a system of dangerous complexity and constant fruitless hair-splitting, which made it all the more necessary emphatically to declare that with the dawn of the Messianic Age a fundamental change must be made. The Jews were returning home. The laws for the Diaspora were meant only for use in foreign lands. They must be annulled. Thousands would not immediately grasp the full significance of the coming of the Messiah, but they would be helped to understanding if the conventional laws of religion and morality were done away with, laws which from dawn till sunset had become woven into the very tissue of their lives.

A Messiah must be in a position to attempt this test of power, and Primo was able forthwith to justify his attitude by appealing to the Zohar which said that when the Messiah conjured up the *Olam ha-Tikkun*, the World of Order, a new system would come into being and the old Jewish conceptions of right and wrong would be abolished. The great Jewish code of ritual, the *Shulhan Aruk* (The Covered Table), would also lose its binding force. Thus in despising the Law the Messiah committed no sin, but on the contrary proved himself to be the Messiah by inaugurating a new order, for which purpose he had been sent into the world. Somewhere in the infinite ether sat enthroned the "Holy Father," the "Ancient of Days," whom in olden times people ignorantly called God. He had made the universe perfect, but it had sunk into im-

perfection through the impurity of matter, and now from His holy bosom He had sent forth the Messiah, another divine personage, the *Malka Kadisha*, the "Holy King," the true and perfect archetypal man of the new world, Adam Kadmon. To him He had given power and authority to establish final order in the world, to abolish sin and evil, to exorcize fallen spirits and to open up the way once more for the grace of God to descend to earth. This was what the Messiah was doing, and was guilty of no sin.

Sabbatai's followers could readily understand this; nevertheless it was hard to give up, as it were, in twenty-four hours habits to which they had been accustomed all their lives. Hence it devolved upon Primo and Nathan to justify the abrogation of the Law by advancing ever stronger proofs that the Messianic Age had dawned. And in this they succeeded much better at close quarters than at a distance. In Jerusalem opinion was divided regarding Sabbatai and his activities. The Rabbis deeply resented his autocratic distribution of alms and Nathan's circular gave rise to much vexation and unpleasantness. The community of Jerusalem was undoubtedly in a most embarrassing position. The city was administered by a Turkish Governor who, far from regarding it as his duty to be kind to the Jews, felt it incumbent upon him to secure in the form of taxes, levies and arbitrary fines, his share of the alms which poured in from every quarter of Jewry. The news of Nathan's circular and the tumultuous scenes to which it led in the Jewish quarter, possibly, too, the knowledge that Sabbatai had brought a large sum of money from Cairo, provided him with a welcome excuse for interference. But the fact that Sabbatai was aiming

at dethroning the Sultan did not lead him to treat him as a rebel or even to report him to Constantinople; all he did was to levy heavy fines on the Jewish community.

With some justification the Rabbis regarded Sabbatai as responsible for this further measure of oppression and on pain of a ban demanded his immediate departure from the city. The opposition was headed by Rabbi Jacob Chagis, whose hostility may have been increased by the fact that his own family circle were filled with enthusiasm for Sabbatai.

Whether the ban was actually pronounced or not we have no means of knowing. But in any case Sabbatai had no need to fear it. For the first time in his life he was free to decide his own course, or apparently free, for below the surface we must always suspect the hand of Primo. And it was not his fear of the ban, but his desire to reach an immediate, definite decision that made him leave Jerusalem. His departure did not have the appearance of flight, as it had done on previous occasions, but was attended by extremely elaborate preparations. First, two messengers were appointed to go out into the world and announce that Sabbatai was the Messiah. They were Sabbatai Raphael and Mattatha Bloch. One went to Europe and the other to Egypt. Bloch was afterwards given a crown as a reward for his services.

Next a luxurious travelling train was got together. Exasperated by these elaborate and unconcerned preparations, the Jerusalem Rabbis tried to level a further blow at their enemy, and reported Sabbatai to their colleagues in Constantinople, accusing him of having transgressed the Law of God and blasphemed His Name. Their com-

munication must have been couched in extremely emphatic terms, for Constantinople felt impelled to send a letter to the community of Ismir signed by twenty-five Rabbis, headed by the Chacham Bashi, Yomtov ben Jazer, begging them to devise some means of rendering Sabbatai innocuous should he happen to repair to their city.

Sabbatai heard of this, but cared not a straw. Nathan, on the other hand, played the outraged prophet. He addressed an indignant letter to the community of Jerusalem, telling them that, as a punishment for their treatment of the Messiah, Gaza instead of Jerusalem would in future be the latter's headquarters. This so much perturbed the community of Jerusalem that soon after receiving it they sent a deputation to Sabbatai in Ismir apologizing for what they had done.

Sabbatai now announced the goal of his journey. It was Ismir. He felt more than ever drawn to the city of his birth and of his early days. He was apparently animated by the desire to make the place which had witnessed his first passionate start and its attendant failure the scene of his success, since from the standpoint of policy, the city was useless. For, to make a successful start in the East, he should have staged his appearance in the historical city of Jerusalem or in the real centre of the Jewish world—Constantinople. But in neither place was he regarded with favour. True, Ismir had banned him, but he could rely on his old following there, and on the fact that its inhabitants would be filled with a certain pride to think that it was one of their own sons who had been chosen as the Messiah. Moreover, as a great and growing mercantile city, it was a particularly good centre for the circulation of news. And

when some years previously he had secretly returned there for the first time since the ban had been pronounced against him, he had discovered that it was quite ineffective and that nobody remembered anything about it. Nathan did all he could to smooth his path and to make other places set a good example to the inhabitants of Ismir. On his way Sabbatai passed through Aleppo, whither the prophet sent a warning letter, exhorting the people to give the Messiah a good reception and not to follow the example of Jerusalem, lest they found that the fate which had overtaken the latter was also theirs, for he interpreted the fines imposed by the Governor on the community there as punishment for their scandalous treatment of Sabbatai. "Remember that the hour is at hand!" he conjured them. And he succeeded, for the people he was addressing were not only Jews but Orientals. And in this connexion it should be borne in mind that there were two factors which did much towards securing credence for the reports that were circulated—in the East the eager receptivity and vivid imagination of the Oriental mind, and in the West the distance that lends enchantment, and the profound respect people felt for the written word.

Sabbatai met with an enthusiastic reception at Aleppo; although he had not yet proclaimed himself the Messiah he was greeted as though he had. The people danced for joy, intoxicated by the honour of having the Messiah with them for one stage of his journey. And they wrote an enthusiastic letter to the community at Constantinople, saying that the Messiah was with them and that God would now fulfil the promises he had made by the mouth of the prophets. They were not merely relying on what Na-

than had told them, but had with their own eyes beheld signs and wonders performed every day in the vicinity of this man. Furthermore, people had fallen down, overcome by fits and spasms—a disconcerting phenomenon which subsequently occurred wherever Sabbatai appeared—and stammeringly proclaimed the advent of the Messiah and Sabbatai's appointment to that office.

They urgently begged him to remain with them, if only for a couple of months. But he could not consent to do so; for the welcome he had just received had revealed all the possibilities of the hour to him, and he felt he must turn them to account. Besides, apart from everything else, time pressed. It was late autumn in the year 1665; only a few weeks remained before the new year, when failure must be out of the question. He was therefore constrained to decline the invitation, though he accepted with thanks the offer of an escort of honour as far as Ismir. Throughout the journey Sabbatai wore a large white praying-shawl. His escort from Aleppo, who were well acquainted with the neighbourhood and its customs, tried to persuade him to take it off, for it was conspicuous from a great distance and showed that the procession was a Jewish one and was therefore a lure for robbers. For in this district the Jews were held to be rich, and were constantly being plundered. But Sabbatai explained that he could not do otherwise, as it was God's order. When the members of the escort returned to Aleppo, they were full of the wonders of the journey and the magnificence of the procession. One and all declared that every night they had seen a body of men accompanying the procession on either side, but as soon as the sun rose they vanished. This was duly reported to

Constantinople, and from this fact the logical conclusion was drawn that the day of redemption had dawned, and all trade and work came to a standstill. The wealthy raised a fund to enable the poor to cease working and in pious retirement prepare their souls for the Day of the Lord.

The contradictory reports that reached Constantinople from Jerusalem and Aleppo created indescribable excitement there. Pricks of conscience were felt. Surely Sabbatai was the young scholar from Ismir whom the Rabbis in Constantinople had once had thrashed by a schoolmaster! He was now travelling through the country as the Messiah! Jachini set to work and by his preaching soon raised a solid body of followers. The most acrimonious disputes arose between them and their opponents, fostered by reports, the origin of which it was impossible to discover. Friends and foes alike neglected their work to join in the arguments, trying to persuade their adversaries and insulting and fighting each other. At last matters reached such a pitch in the Jewish quarter that the Rabbis were terrified. They had no wish to share the fate of Jerusalem!

They feared that while Jerusalem had been punished by fines, they themselves, being at such close quarters to the Sultan in Adrianople, might be subjected to some physical punishment, or even condemned to death. So, under threat of severe penalties, they forbade all discussions about Sabbatai and Messianism.

But all to no purpose! Such passions could not be stifled, for it was not a mere matter of academic dispute, as for instance, whether nails should be cut for the Sabbath on the Friday or the Thursday. The subject lay at the very root of religious and everyday life. Sabbatai's opponents

argued vehemently that the preliminary signs which the Scriptures declared would herald the advent of the Messiah had not occurred. For instance, the Messiah born of the tribe of Benjamin should first have appeared as a forerunner. Where was such a man to be found? Moreover Malachi had prophesied that the Temple must be restored, but the only remains of the Temple which had not become a Turkish mosque were a rubbish heap. Furthermore, even the material conditions required for the appearance of the Messiah were lacking, not to mention the spiritual ones. He was to belong to the House of David, but no proof of this had been advanced. The prophet Micah had said that he was to be born in Bethlehem and both Kimchi and Rashi confirmed this. But there could be no manner of doubt that Sabbatai had been born in Ismir. Nowhere in sacred lore was it laid down that the Messiah was to be called Sabbatai Zevi. He might bear hundreds of other names—the Prince of this World, the Prince of God's Countenance, the Protector of Israel, etc. He was also to be the most beautiful of men by virtue of his righteousness, but, in Jerusalem, Sabbatai had not even distributed money fairly among the poor. Isaiah had declared that he would be wiser than Solomon and greater than Moses. But Sabbatai could not prove his wisdom by a single sentence he had written. Indeed—and this was a weighty argument—had he ever written a single line? And what had he done to prove that he was greater than Moses? But all these arguments, numerous and weighty though they were, were of no avail against those who possessed the strongest and most irrefutable of all arguments, the will to believe. The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah

concerning the Messiah obviously referred to Sabbatai, and the words of Ezekiel also seemed to them to apply to him: "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered and I will bring them to their own land, and I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David." And anything they could not prove intellectually they proved by signs and omens. A comet had appeared in the sky. What could that mean but the beginning of a new era? There were men in their midst who had seen visions, and beheld Sabbatai with the triple crown of the Messiah on his head ruling and conquering all the peoples of the world. Could any one dare to deny this or say it was not true? And if further proof were needed, there was the news that had come from Aleppo where the prophet Ezekiel had appeared in the synagogue clad in a white gown with a girdle of black leather about his loins. This proved that the Messiah had come. No, replied their opponents, the news from Aleppo might be true, but all it proved was that "the great and terrible day of the Lord" was at hand.

These disputes were kept alive by the constant influx of letters which reached Constantinople and were passed from hand to hand. In time their number became so enormous and their contents were sometimes so absurd and unscrupulous that the Rabbis came to the conclusion that somewhere there must be a body of people who either for lofty or venal motives were forging them. They accordingly made investigations and actually discovered a whole factory of forgeries, the sole purpose of which was apparently to commercialize the people's belief in the miracu-

lous. They imposed heavy punishments upon the forgers, but to no purpose. For suddenly the disputes were silenced for awhile, and even the opponents of the Messianic idea were forced anxiously to hold their tongues, on the receipt of the news that Sabbatai Zevi had arrived in Ismir and that the city was delirious with joy!

CHAPTER VIII

Tumult

AN Age is ripe for a great experience when it has the courage momentarily to abandon the woeful control of reason and respond to the call of the heart. The value of an experience does not depend on whether it can survive the test of reason, for reason fetters, experience sets free, and even if in the end it prove disastrous, that which it represents—the reply to a clear call—constitutes a definite gain. Reason is but a monologue on the part of the individual. Experience is a duologue between God and his creature.

Sabbatai Zevi had done comparatively little to prepare the Age for his appearance. Its readiness, in so far as it was not the work of the people at large, was due to decisive measures taken by others than himself. All he contributed was an infallible instinct for knowing where to appear and where a harvest was to be reaped. It was this instinct that made him set out for Ismir, where he found people far more ready to receive him than he could possibly have expected. For this he was chiefly indebted to his brothers. Their trade had flourished and they had become wealthy men and were generously disbursing their money in their brother's interests, distributing largess freely among the poor and mean, the workers, fisherfolk and craftsmen.

They gave alms ostensibly with the pious object of enabling the recipients to prepare themselves for the new Age in peace and comfort, but its practical result was the purchase of votes for the Messiah. Possibly they knew what they were doing and were animated by political motives, regarding it as all-important to secure so large a following for their brother from the beginning that from the very day he appeared he would have no need to fear opposition. True, Ismir had long since forgotten the ban pronounced against Sabbatai. But here, as in Jerusalem and Constantinople, it was the masses who were on his side and the scholars who were opposed to him. This is always the case in similar circumstances all the world over.

But for the moment the peculiarity of the situation in Ismir lay in the fact that although the scholars were against Sabbatai they no longer enjoyed any authority. The latent spirit of the Age, Nathan's manifestoes circulated by the thousand, the rumours from Cairo, Jerusalem and Aleppo, the eagerness of Sabbatai's old followers and disciples, and his brothers' money, all contributed to produce a state of eager expectation which was further increased by the interest and sympathy of the European merchants. Thus the ground was prepared for an explosion on the slightest pretext, and it was in this mood of tense excitement that the people received the news that the Messiah was before the gates of their city.

In a moment the streets were alive with people. The crowd pressed forward to the outskirts of the city and there beheld approaching them a gorgeous procession the

like of which they had never before set eyes on. Men clad in magnificent garments covered with the dust of travel were singing psalms at the top of their voices and dancing in their excitement; the faces of young men and venerable old men were distorted with eagerness, while, here and there, grave countenances could be seen, lined with the runic characters of wisdom. Everybody already knew that men from the remotest corners of the East had left their families to take part in this triumphal entry; and in their midst strode a tall dark handsome man with fanatical eyes—the Messiah. Beside him—and for these Jews this constituted the strangest part of the whole proceeding—was a woman in a cloak of white silk. She was extremely beautiful and proud, as they imagined a Queen should be, and over the whole procession a passionate murmur of excited voices hung like a cloud. A fable had become reality and was presented to their eyes in a form far surpassing anything they had ever imagined, for they could see and believe it without fear of disappointment or of a rude awakening.

The ground seemed to slip from beneath their feet. They lost their heads and shouted, “Messiah! Messiah!” Whereupon Sabbatai stepped out from the ranks of his followers and raised his hand. Every voice was immediately hushed. The Messiah was about to speak! And he spake and forbade them to call him Messiah. They were not to do so until he gave them permission.

Those who a moment before had been shouting unrestrainedly grew silent. If the Messiah so desired, they could quell even their passions; and, entirely subservient to his will, they accompanied him to his brothers’ house,

where he was to stay. On arriving there, he immediately retired to a remote room and began a fast, while the crowd stood outside and waited.

Why did Sabbatai not wish to be hailed as Messiah? Surely he had come to Ismir with that object in view! Why, when confronted by the enthusiasm of the masses, who from the very first had been subjugated by him, did he insist on this postponement, which gave the impression of a subtle ruse calculated to increase their suspense? Obviously because he wished to maintain control of the course of events. As will be seen, he was expecting a special sign of acknowledgment from without, for which he wished to wait, and he therefore held the masses back. But it was for the last time! Even the most hostile witness of what followed was bound to acknowledge that in the later stages of his career he was completely at the mercy of the whims of the crowd, and whatever presence of mind he may be credited with, he was henceforward entirely under the control of the suggestive power of a people in an exaggerated state of spiritual exaltation.

But for the time being the crowd was left to its own resources and could obtain only meagre satisfaction from the dribblets of news that leaked out of the home of the brothers Zevi. But even these scanty details they moulded into legend and miracle. Possibly there had been some occasion for dispute between Sabbatai and his brother Elijah. In any case the following tale was circulated through the streets. Elijah, it was said, did not believe in his brother's Messiahship. He was also afraid that the Turks would punish the city for recognizing a Messiah who aimed at depriving the Sultan of his crown. Better, he argued, that

one man should die than that all the Jews should be hurled to perdition. So one day, when he found his brother alone in the room, he fell upon him with a sword. Sabbatai did not stir, but merely kept his eyes fixed upon him, and Elijah staggered back beneath his gaze and dropped to the ground as though he were dead. But from that moment he believed in the Messiah.

Forced to inactivity and eager to give proof of their devotion, the crowd selected from among themselves a body-guard of a few hundred men and women, who day and night kept watch outside the Messiah's house. Though it did not suffice to quell their growing impatience, at least it provided them with something to do. They now reached the conclusion that Sabbatai had had good reason for imposing silence upon them, and began to whisper to each other that he was expecting an important event. And they awaited it feverishly with him. At last, on the fourth of Tevet, December 12, it occurred. Four men as brown as Moors arrived in the town, with travellers' staves in their hands. They marched through the streets inquiring for Sabbatai's house. Two of them were well-known figures—Moses Galante and Daniel Pinto. They had come from Aleppo with news. The people showed them the way and began to press about them with questions. What sort of news was it and whence did it come? It was a message from the community of Aleppo and from the prophet Nathan of Gaza. They could say no more. They bore sealed letters upon them.

Surrounded by a crowd of people they arrived in front of Sabbatai's house and a message was taken in to say that they were there. The reply came that Sabbatai was keep-

ing a solemn fast and could not be disturbed. But the people demurred and grew impatient and began to shout out that after all the message was addressed to the Messiah, to *their* Messiah, and that it concerned them just as much as it concerned Sabbatai. He must break his fast and receive the messengers, open and read the letters, and communicate their contents to the people. At last, implying that he had no wish to shut his ears to the appeal of the people, Sabbatai gave in.

One letter contained a message of homage from the community of Aleppo. The other was a greeting from the prophet Nathan, a fulsome letter full of beautiful sentiments addressed to him, but prolix and insignificant compared with some of his other compositions. It was merely a constant repetition of the theme, "Thou art the true Messiah. In thee do I put my trust! Through thee will salvation come!" But for the people the event was more important than the manner of its presentation. They regarded it as decisive confirmation. Here were serious men and scholars who had undertaken a long pilgrimage to Ismir in order to bear a message the tone of which was much more comprehensible than its actual burden. It was the first official deputation and act of homage paid to the Messiah. They had waited so long that they were prepared to accept anything which gave a free outlet to their joy. Great excitement prevailed and the crowd once more claimed him as their Messiah with such insistence that it was impossible to resist them any longer.

They carried Sabbatai along with them. Regarding the arrival of the pilgrimage as the decisive moment, he declared that he would not merely break his fast but aban-

don it altogether. This was no time for fasting! On the contrary, they should all rejoice; and he promulgated his first decree concerning religious matters. From that moment to the end of the year there was to be no more fasting, but in honour of that day a great festival was to be celebrated. For the mass of the people this was indeed meat and drink! Their festival had begun!

Sabbatai rewarded the messengers in princely fashion and persuaded his friends to do likewise, and then sent them forth on their homeward way as powerful advocates in his favour. Within the confines of the city walls his cause was won. Henceforward, whenever he allowed himself to be seen in the streets—and for various reasons he was now anxious to do so as often as possible—he was always surrounded by hundreds of his bodyguard. Every step he took outside his brothers' house developed into a magnificent procession. A banner was borne before him with a device taken from the verse in the Psalms, "The right hand of the Lord is exalted." The people came out of their homes with costly rugs and carpets and spread them out before him in the streets. But with a grand gesture of humble modesty he refused to step on them and turned aside to avoid them. But this did not prevent him from carrying a large silver fan, with which from time to time he solemnly touched one or other among the crowd, and those thus picked out imagined they were consecrated to Heaven. He also had a gold signet ring made, engraved with the image of a serpent with its tail in its mouth, possibly in vague reminiscence of the Egyptian symbol of eternity, or perhaps, as he himself admitted, because the word *Nachash*, serpent, had the same number value as the word

Mashiak. Supported by crowds of the faithful and surrounded by torch-bearers, he also made nocturnal processions accompanied by much shouting and singing of songs. According to the city regulations, this was a punishable offence, for only the Frankish merchants were allowed to show themselves in the streets by night with a lantern. But the people no longer cared about these prohibitions. Nor had they anything to fear from the Turkish watchmen, who cautiously held aloof from the fanatical crowds. But it gave Sabbatai's supporters the opportunity of letting the whole world know that the authorities did not dare to interfere in any way with the Jews in their Messianic rejoicings.

Two days after the arrival of the messengers, on the sixth of Tevet, December 14, 1665, Sabbatai marched in solemn procession to the synagogue. Seventeen years had elapsed since he had stood there and, as it were, tried the handle of a closed door, thinking in his fiery and impetuous youth that it was sufficient for him to announce himself symbolically to the people to meet with understanding and support. But now he was older and wiser and things had changed so fatefully that he was disposed to feel that he might with a clear conscience reap the harvest of what he had sown so many years before. For now the people were actually knocking at his door, and although they were merely seeking a leader to set them free, Sabbatai imagined that they were appealing to him as a man, a personality, and an individual. He stood before them ready to answer the appeal as he understood it, and he did so standing on the *Almemor*, no longer a suppliant but a benefactor, while the roar of the *Shofar* filled the

synagogue. The people shook with excitement as he cried out, "I am the Messiah!" Once he had offered himself. Now he proclaimed himself. And he heard the response which had not been vouchsafed in Jewish history for over a thousand years and was never to be repeated: "Long live our King, the Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi!"

More like a King than a Messiah, he made his way from the synagogue to his house, to hold a royal levee and receive the congratulations of his subjects and those who believed in him. For a whole day the people filed past him, kissing his hand and the hem of his garment. Beside him on a throne sat Sarah, beautiful and excited, even amid that turbulent crowd of faces and colours providing a conspicuous personal note. Among those who came to congratulate were many who only on the previous day were known to be hostile to him but now bowed to the inevitable. All who were not convinced at heart were nevertheless bound to admit that he was a King holding his court and that at least in his own circle he wielded sovereign power and authority. And they bowed their heads. Nor was there any need for them to be ashamed of so doing, for among those who came to do obeisance to this King were many who were not Jews. The ceremony lasted late into the night.

The events that followed are crowded into the space of sixteen days, from the seventh to the twenty-second of Tevet, that is, from December 15 to 30, 1665, when Sabbatai concluded his stay in Ismir. They form one of the strangest chapters in history.

On the following morning, the seventh of Tevet, when the people were again flocking to his house, they were

greeted by a strange piece of news. Sabbatai informed them that during the night the Spirit of God had appeared to him and told him that in order to become possessed of the full dignity of a Messiah he must henceforth cohabit with his wife. A similar divine command had been given to Sarah, telling her to submit to her husband. They had therefore fulfilled the behest of the Almighty and, in accordance with the popular custom in the East, the people were publicly shown the sheet bearing the traces of virginity upon it. The crowd received the news and its visual proof with loud rejoicings.

What did this mean? Was it true? Or was it a fraud? As far as the proofs of Sarah's virginity are concerned, it was undoubtedly a fraud. While we may make every excuse for Sarah's manner of life, there can be no doubt that she had had relations with innumerable men. Thus the proof of her virginity was spurious and was intended to serve a special purpose. Did Sabbatai wish to imply that a miracle had taken place, and that, in spite of her previous life, Sarah had become a virgin again? Or did he wish to make a concession to the strict views of these simple folk who regarded it as essential for a Jewish maiden to be chaste until she was married? Or did he wish to confute the charge of harlotry brought against Sarah by his enemies? Possibly the whole affair was intended merely as an act of self-justification of which the public demonstration was a necessary part. The people, though not his opponents, may have forgotten that he had been obliged to dissolve two marriages under suspicious circumstances. At the time he had justified his conduct by appealing to divine command. And now he advanced the last proof of his claim.

The people believed him and accepted the evidence he offered. Not so his opponents! The contempt with which they regarded his relations with Sarah may be gathered from a contemporary non-Jewish authority who puts the matter somewhat coarsely as follows: "Sarah . . . however, was just as little satisfied with him as if she had married a priest of Cybele or a eunuch, and he held aloof from her, as he himself confessed, just as he had done in the case of the others."

The importance that Sabbatai himself ascribed to this proceeding may be gathered from the fact that immediately afterwards he marched in solemn procession to the synagogue, and on his way thither employed new symbols of his own contrivance. In front of him marched a body of men bearing vessels containing preserves and vases of flowers and behind him came another holding a comb in a sheath. He himself was accompanied by two Chachamim, who walked beside him and held his white mantle. He carried his silver fan, as Aaron carried a staff, and again honoured people here and there by touching them with it. Thus they reached the synagogue and he immediately began to make fresh demonstrations. Taking a stick, he struck the tabernacle containing the Thora scrolls seven times and in so doing pronounced the name of God in full. Was this a symbolic repetition of the striking of the rock by Moses in the desert to give water to the thirsty Israelites? Was it a knocking at God's door, an importuning of the Almighty? Or was it a proof of the invulnerability of the Messiah? In any case, it was a symbolic act, the meaning of which was probably not clear even to Sabbatai himself and has all the appearance of a

purely emotional proceeding. He then supplied the final meaning of the whole ceremony by declaring that Sarah had conceived a son that night but that the child would not live. Here he was again obviously making a statement which had a definite ulterior motive. If the one great blessing of life according to Jewish ideas, the blessing of offspring, were denied to the Messiah, the most blessed of men, this must be regarded either as a punishment or as a special dispensation of Providence. Otherwise the world was left blasphemously to conclude that the Messiah was incapable of begetting children. Now, although the people accepted this last announcement, as they had accepted so many other things, they were neither able altogether to overcome a silent feeling of disappointment, nor by their power of invention to fill the void in their imaginary picture of the Messiah. Thus, in his vindication of Sabbatai, Baruch de Arezzo declares that the Messiah had both a son and a daughter. Other authorities assert that after his apostasy a son was born to him whom he named Ishmael Mordecai. But these are pious inventions, for the Messiah died without issue.

Just as Sabbatai turned this proceeding to account to perform yet other symbolic acts, he used the divine service that followed to introduce drastic changes, from the Jewish point of view, into the traditional order of prayers. To prove that every ordinary day was now a feast day, on entering the synagogue he sang a psalm which according to the usual ritual was intended only for use at divine service on the Sabbath. He also insisted that henceforward God's name should always be pronounced in full, and laid particular stress upon this. He may have been induced to

take this step by the mystical significance attached to the utterance of the Shem ha'mforash in the teaching of the Kabala, where it says: "God's creation which was intended to be perfect could not manifest itself as perfection because mankind had fallen into sin. Thus the higher and the lower world fell asunder, and as the order of the world was disturbed, so also was the perfection of God. So He withdrew into the distance where none could reach Him and his Name, like the two worlds, fell asunder. But when the Messiah shall come to restore order in the world, then shall the oneness of God and the perfect unity of His Name also be restored. And for this reason the utterance of the Name of God in full is one of the most potent signs that a new period of grace has begun."

An act which seventeen years previously had reduced the congregation to terrified silence now filled them with wild enthusiasm. One after the other rose, went up to the Almémor, and did homage to the Messiah by murmuring a blessing and offering alms for charity. Whereas hitherto, in obedience to a long-established custom of the Diaspora, the Jews had always asked in their prayers for a blessing on the head of the country in which they happened to find themselves, they now omitted all reference to the great and terrible Sultan. At last they had their own leader for whom they introduced a blessing full of profound and simple faith. Thousands throughout the East and in Egypt and Italy said the following *Misheberak*, or blessing, for him: "May He who giveth succour to Kings, Potentates, and Princes, whose kingdom is the kingdom of every world, the great, just and terrible God, the Holy King whom we adore and who hath not His like in heaven and

earth, who ruleth in the sky and sitting on the throne maketh a covenant with His servant David, so that he may ascend the throne in his kingdom, which shall endure to all eternity—may He bless, protect, strengthen, uphold, and exalt ever higher and higher our Lord and King, the wise, holy, pious, and supreme Sultan, Sabbatai Zevi, the divine Messiah, the Messiah of the God of Jacob, the Heavenly Lion, the King of Justice, the King of Kings, Sabbatai Zevi. O King of all Kings, keep him, we implore Thee, through Thy mercy. Let him live, and protect him in all his troubles and trials; lift up the stars of his kingdom and bow the hearts of all princes and rulers that they may please him and us and all Israel. Amen!"

In this blessing the people unburdened their hearts and at the same time sacrificed some of their possessions and each in turn received Sabbatai's blessing: "Thou who didst bless our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, bless also N. N., in that he hath freely given the sum of . . ." (The specification of the sum need cause no surprise if we bear in mind the important part played by alms and charity in the life of the Jewish world at that time.)

The money thus contributed and the various other sums Sabbatai received as presents, he turned to account in a remarkable way. He did not touch a penny of it himself, for he had wealthy brothers. Anything that was not distributed among the poor he used to purchase the freedom of Jews working in the galleys, which were the prisons of the period. Those he set free were not necessarily very hardened criminals, for men were sent to the galleys for trifling offences, perhaps for an unproved accusation or a small debt. Nevertheless, here and there among them there were

undoubtedly individuals whose determined unscrupulousness might prove profitable to the cause of a Messiah, and in any case, they must one and all have been delighted to be thus suddenly restored to freedom, and enabled joyfully to take part in the Sabbataian feast days. Later on these people, together with other devoted adherents of the Messiah, formed a sort of assault detachment, who by means of anything but spiritual or logical arguments imposed silence on those who still wavered or were actually hostile, and made them march to heel though they may still have been rebellious at heart.

For Sabbatai had not yet secured the unconditional support of the whole city. Isolated individuals, a number of scholars, and the Rabbis almost to a man were against him. Nor did they confine themselves to standing aloof from the movement. They regarded it as a menace to the people and a national calamity for the whole of Judaism. Hence they felt called upon to do everything in their power to oppose it, and in order that the people might know nothing of their meetings and their resolutions, they used to assemble secretly like conspirators, in the house of Judah Murtia, who was above suspicion. The three most prominent Rabbis, Aaron de la Papa, who was the religious head of the community, Benveniste, and Solomon Algazi, a Talmudist of repute, used to preside over these meetings, at which all that had occurred was discussed and considered in detail. Sabbatai's most insignificant success was interpreted as fraud and blasphemy. Armed with copies of all the letters that had been circulated, more particularly Nathan's manifestoes and his exhaustive report to Chelebi in Cairo, they held long discussions and weighed

all the evidence and finally declared that the contents of all the documents and reports were hopelessly in conflict with the precepts and ordinances of Holy Writ. Thus they not only had the right but it was actually their bounden duty to take steps against Sabbatai.

But what could they do? What means had they still at their disposal to put a stop to his activities? He certainly would not obey them of his own free will. They could pronounce another ban against him, but they might as well beat the air. Nobody would take the slightest notice, least of all Sabbatai himself; its only result would be to bring down the wrath of the whole community upon their own heads. The steps they would have to take against him must be so drastic that he would not be able to exercise any further influence. Drawing the inevitable conclusion from this, one of the Chachamim, in agitated tones, pronounced sentence of death against Sabbatai.

But confronted by this solution, which indeed promised to be final, most of those present shrank back in fear. Perhaps, after all, there was something to be said in his favour, and one of them ventured to ask the Chacham why he had pronounced so severe a sentence. True, Sabbatai was not the Messiah, but had not his appearance led many Jews to confess their sins and give proof of repentance by the performance of penitential exercises? A man who had accomplished that, even though he were a deceiver, surely ought not to be put to death!

The conspirators were apparently moved by this argument, but Benveniste put his hand into the pocket of his gown and took out a document. It was a letter from Constantinople to the Rabbis of Ismir, a passionate appeal full

Die Großen Erz Betrieger.

Der falsche Messias
IACOB NAYLOR
König der Quacker.
Im 1657 Jahr.

Der falsche Messias
SABATAI-SEVI
König der Juden.
Im 1666 Jahr.



So siehet NAYLOR aus in seiner rechten Tracht,
Die ihn in Occident zum Quacker-König macht,
Und das ist SABATAI den in den Orient
Die ganze Juden schaffte MESSIAS hat genannt.

“TWO ARCH-IMPOSTORS”

Jacob Naylor and Sabbatai Zevi

of hatred, imploring them to put an end to Sabbatai's activities by the most drastic possible measure—death! Old Yomtov ben Jazer had written over his signature: "The man against whose innovations we are protesting must be regarded as an unbeliever and any man who kills him will be received by God as though he had won a large number of souls. Aye, the hand that is raised to kill this man will be blest by God and man."

This letter, supported by Benveniste's eloquence and the knowledge that there were others outside who shared the opinion of those present at the meeting, clinched the matter, and with the approval of la Papa a resolution to put Sabbatai to death was passed. As they could not count on any support from the people, they decided, moreover, to appoint one of their own body to carry out the sentence. But the situation thus created secured a great triumph for the Messiah who was not present and knew nothing of the conspiracy. For there was not one among them who was prepared to carry out the sentence, or who showed any wish to be the first to raise a hand against him. And a sort of subterranean feeling caused many of them to conclude that since so many believed in him he might perhaps be the Messiah after all.

Thus the conspirators adjourned, after having reached a decision that could not possibly be put into action. But, in spite of all, the fact that a secret conference had been held leaked out, and with the speedy circulation of news from mouth to mouth in the East, reached the ears of the masses on the same day, the eighth of Tevet, or December 16. Sabbatai also heard it through them. No details were given and he knew nothing of the death sentence. But

the fact that certain people had actually dared to declare themselves opposed to him and his idea filled him with wild and quite unkingly rage. His authority both as man and Messiah had been attacked, and he felt a burning desire to vindicate both.

These people had declared that his Messianic activities were opposed to Holy Writ, an extremely serious indictment which might prove dangerous. It was therefore incumbent upon him to prove that it was not a matter of the sacredness of Holy Writ but of the recognition and binding force of his own actions. It was he who now had to decide what religion was or was not, what was sacred and what was profane. What the people believed for the time being was always sacred and therefore true. The time had come for him to deny all connexion between his own Messiahship and Holy Writ. Thus full of defiance, secret fear and creative enthusiasm he had a special day of prayer proclaimed on which the Jews were to remain in the synagogue.

Everything took place precisely as he had arranged. The people remained the whole day in the synagogue praying. With his silver fan in his hand, escorted by two scholars, and with attendants marching ahead bearing vessels of preserves and vases of flowers, he went to the synagogue, and taking the stick again struck the Holy Tabernacle. The people accepted the whole proceeding, convinced that secret mysteries were being enacted in accordance with God's orders.

But Sabbatai was not satisfied with this proof of his authority. He still felt he had to settle accounts with his opponents, man by man. He did not yet dare to make a

direct attack upon them, for he was not certain how far he could rely on his followers, or whether they would not fail him when he summoned them to rise up against those who had hitherto been their spiritual leaders. So he decided upon a less dangerous course which both in itself and in the manner it was carried out was suspiciously undignified. He made up his mind to denounce his adversaries before the Turkish Kadi of the city.

As he was preparing to take this step, the news spread through the town that Sabbatai was going to drive the Kadi from his post, and crowds flocked together eager to witness fresh miracles. Sabbatai came out of his house, and gazed upon the multitude, and forthwith began to sing, "The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly," and the people joined in. Then the banner was unfurled and the solemn procession marched through the streets until it reached the Kadi's house. While the crowd remained outside gazing on in astonished silence, Sabbatai, accompanied by only one of his brothers, entered and demanded an audience. Although he could speak Arabic fluently, he addressed the Kadi in Hebrew, employing his brother as interpreter. Apparently, when the Kadi received him, Sabbatai showed some embarrassment and did not at first know what to say. But soon he was able to give a list of the people whom he suspected of being his enemies, accusing them of having insulted the King. The Kadi made a note of the charges and said he would punish the offenders.

And, as a matter of fact, severe fines were imposed upon the Jews whom Sabbatai had denounced. Even his own friends, however, could not help feeling that such a de-

nunciation was a piece of infamy and accused him of having borne false witness. But with a smile Sabbatai informed them that those he had denounced really had spoken slightly of the King, namely himself, and deserved to be punished for so doing. But even those who accepted this cunning explanation could not forgive him for having taken his private grievances to the Turkish authorities, for it was a rigid custom among the Jews to settle all differences between themselves before their own Jewish courts. But for the time being Sabbatai had no reason to trouble about this. For, as far as he was concerned, this action based on petty spite merely led to an increase of his power and prestige among the people. When he left the Kadi's house after the audience the crowd were still waiting outside, and when they saw his radiant self-satisfied expression, they greeted him with songs and cheers. Before many hours had passed another legend was passed from mouth to mouth. Who can tell how it came into being? Is there, in every group of men bound by a strong common belief, always one who is a liar, or does the force of mass sensation always inspire one of them to describe what has taken place in terms of poetic fiction? Or were they merely following the example of their Messiah and expressing their desires with so much firmness and conviction that they might be recorded as truths?

Be this as it may, the new legend was to the following effect: when Sabbatai entered the Kadi's audience chamber nobody was present. Without further ado the Messiah took the Kadi's place, and when the latter entered he did not rise. Nay more, to show his contempt and superiority he trampled the Kadi's cloak underfoot. The Kadi did not

dare to retaliate, and when Sabbatai began to speak flames issued from his mouth and singed the Kadi's beard and almost set fire to the room, while a pillar of flame rose up between the two men. The Kadi then turned to Sabbatai's brother and implored him to take him away, for he was not a man but an angel of God!

Those who could not bring themselves to lend full credence to this miraculous tale, nevertheless believed that the very fact that the Kadi had received Sabbatai, listened to him and let him go without laying hands on him for his Messianic presumptions, constituted a miracle. Those who were of this opinion were the faithful realists.

On his return from this first attack on his enemies Sabbatai continued to hold his royal court, and in so doing again aroused immense astonishment among the Jews by adding another innovation to the many he had already introduced. He allowed women to enter, sat beside them at table, and talked to them in wise and kindly paternal tones. Though such association with women was not precisely forbidden, it broke with all tradition. For hitherto moral custom and usage had segregated the sexes among the Jews. But Sabbatai did away with this. He placed women on an equality with men and even succeeded in establishing the rule that they might also mount the Al-memor when the Thora was read and have the blessing pronounced over them. The emancipation he thus introduced survived as long as his own influence lasted. Sarah's hand may also be traced in the matter. For she, too, unscrupulously broke the shackles of tradition, and was responsible for the fact that men and women openly consorted together in the streets and at processions and festi-

vals, and the nature of these festivals, at which the joys of the table and spiritual and religious exaltation were strangely mingled, suffered a marked change through the presence of women. The pleasure they afforded thus became more human, more genuine and full-blooded, and the reform served to increase the belief of the masses that they were witnessing the dawn of a new era. For the first time within living memory men and women were to be seen dancing together. A new spirit had been stirred to life, and, casting all modesty and scruple to the winds, Sarah set the example by entangling every man whom she desired in the net of her sensuality. The charge brought by his opponents that Sabbatai provoked and encouraged his wife to behave in this way must by no means be regarded as a spiteful invention. The significant silence regarding the details of Sarah's life in contemporary accounts which otherwise eagerly report everything, can be explained only on the assumption that those who were responsible for their compilation felt ashamed and shrank from stating the truth.

As far as Sabbatai himself was concerned, his attitude towards women was not dictated by any personal satisfaction he derived from it. It was merely the result of his desire to acquire power. By his treatment of them he tried to consolidate his influence over the men, as well as to add a fresh element to his following. And he made a particularly favourable impression by constantly associating with the two women who had divorced him, disregarding the Rabbinical law which forbade a man to speak to his divorced wife or remain under the same roof with her. His higher aim justified everything. And this aim, as Sab-

batai himself declared, was nothing less than the complete emancipation of women as a sex. He pointed out to them how they still lay under the stigma of their Mother Eve's original sin, and reminded them of the curse that had then been pronounced against them:

"Unto the woman he said: I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

It was from this divine curse that the Messiah wished to set them free. It was for this that he had come into the world. Whereas he had redeemed and wiped out the sin of Adam, he would also emancipate women and make them happy like men. The women listened and possibly for the first time in their lives the oppression and slavery of their lot came home to them. With tears in their eyes and full of hope they acknowledged the man who promised to set them free even from the burdens imposed by Nature, just as he had already removed the restraints from their everyday lives and lent colour to their existence.

It soon became evident that the women were taking an active part in the movement, as sometimes happens in the case of revolutions when feminine instinct, added to the deliberations and motives of men, acts as a liberating and inciting factor. And indeed the events which now characterized Sabbatai's campaign against his opponents were of a revolutionary nature. As by this time he had the whole city in his power, every expression of disapproval or avowed hostility inevitably reached his ears, and he regarded all means as justified in reducing his enemies to silence. There was no longer any need for him to refer to

the Kadi or play the part of informer. He now had a body-guard of fanatical adherents who undertook to slander his enemies for him, and like a vindictive dictator, he egged them on against all who seemed in any way suspicious or were said to be hostile to him. The merchant, Nachman Gaza, for instance, had expressed his disapproval of the Messiah, and in a trice the mob was storming his house. But, having been warned in time, he escaped to Alexandria. Solomon Algazi, too, was able to escape from the dire peril he was in only by taking flight.

Another opponent was the famous scholar, Aaron de la Papa, who took no pains to conceal his rabid hostility, which was apparently not due entirely to religious differences. He publicly proclaimed that Sabbatai was a curse to Judaism, and that the best thing to do with him was to have him poisoned. He compared him to Reuben, declaring him to be a deceiver. He was perfectly ready to welcome the Messiah when he came, but not this Messiah. Sabbatai was most anxious to be rid of this adversary, and felt that by exploiting the fury of the mob he might be able to do so. This would also provide an opportunity of testing whether he had the weapon of mass indignation sufficiently under control to be able without fear of reaction to direct it against the spiritual chief of the city. In any case, what was now about to happen to the merchant Chaim Pegna looked like a kind of dress rehearsal of a drama of vengeance and spite.

In the midst of all this religious tumult, Chaim Pegna had categorically declared that Sabbatai was not the Messiah and that not a single one of the signs described in Holy Writ applied to him. And he was quite inaccessible

to proofs or arguments. Sabbatai heard of this, and it required only a hint from him for the agents of his rage immediately to set to work to convert Pegna by force or drive him out. But Pegna was obstinate. He refused either to enter into argument or to take flight. He fortified his house and barricaded himself in, prepared to resist to the end. But the people, too, were stubborn and began to lay siege to Pegna's house and to bombard it with stones. In their pent-up fury they might even have stormed the house and murdered Pegna. But it was a Friday in winter. The sun set early and as the Sabbath day had begun the people interrupted the siege and went to the synagogue. Pegna emerged from behind his barricades and also went to attend divine service, but in the Portuguese synagogue. On the following day also he went to prayers, thinking that on this holy day peace would certainly be preserved within the precincts of the city, as had been implied by the people's attitude when the Sabbath began. But he was mistaken. He was no longer concerned only with the people, but with a hysterical man, who was frenzied with rage. While Sabbatai was solemnly celebrating divine service, he was informed that Pegna was in the Portuguese synagogue, and still maintained his attitude of hostility. Sabbatai straightway sent a messenger to the head of the Portuguese community ordering him to have Chaim Pegna turned out of the synagogue. This dignitary, after holding a brief consultation with his colleagues, sent a message to Sabbatai refusing to do this and declaring that they had no right to turn a man out from divine service.

When Sabbatai heard this he lost all control. That any one should dare to meet him with a refusal sent him mad

with rage. He sprang wildly to his feet and at the head of five hundred people stormed up the street. The Sabbath was holy, but the Messiah's authority was holier! Like maniacs they made for the Portuguese synagogue, and those inside, hearing the uproar in the distance, had the doors locked. Sabbatai hammered with his fists upon them and shouted madly to the congregation to deliver up Pegna. From inside came the reply that Pegna was not there. He had escaped over the roof of the synagogue. Sabbatai waited and then declared that that was no reason why they should not open the doors to him. He insisted on entering. "No," came the reply, "we are holding divine service and cannot enter into any dispute."

✓ Pale with rage, Sabbatai turned to his followers, all simple folk, fishermen, artisans, boatmen, egg chandlers, and poulterers. They understood. Suddenly axes and choppers appeared. The Messiah himself seized an axe, and blows began to thunder on the door. It fell to bits and the crowd surged into the synagogue.

Inside they were confronted by a congregation filled with fear and horror at such a desecration of the day and the place. But Sabbatai had no regard for such sentiments. All he knew was that among these men who had refused to deliver up Pegna there must be many a secret enemy, and mounting the pulpit he began to storm and rave. What sort of divine service was this? What prayers were being said here? They could not be lawful prayers! Henceforward, only *his* prayers were to be said here. The sacredness of tradition? He drew a volume of the Pentateuch from his pocket and held it up. This book was far more sacred than the whole of the Thora. Putting his

hands in the form of a trumpet to his mouth as though he were about to blow a blast, he turned to the four quarters of the compass with his eyes raised to heaven. Then suddenly, he grasped the situation and, putting a foolish and wrong interpretation on it and gratuitously associating it with a great historical parallel, the thought of Jesus flashed through his mind. Was he thinking of the scene when *Jeshu hanozri* appeared in the Temple at Jerusalem amid the money-changers? Did he see in himself a parallel to the figure of Jesus and his fate? Had one outsider suddenly understood the other? At that moment, at the zenith of his power, he was overcome by the thought of persecution and martyrdom. He had no wish to defend Jesus, for it was precisely Jesus to whom those about him who were not of the Jewish faith turned for refutation of the Jewish expectations of the Messiah, declaring that the true Messiah had already appeared. Nevertheless at that moment one outsider stood face to face with the other, one persecuted man felt himself united to the other by sorrow and suffering, and the pathos of persecution. Raising his eyes reproachfully to heaven he shouted to the Jews, "What did Jesus of Nazareth do to you that you should have treated him so badly? In spite of everything I shall include him among the prophets!"

Then he was once more overcome with rage. He felt he must give vent to his feelings and called out the names of his enemies, more particularly the Rabbis, applying to them such insulting epithets as swine, camel, hare, and badger and the names of other animals mentioned in the Pentateuch, in the Book of Leviticus, as unclean, and the eating of whose flesh is forbidden as a sin. The fellows

should be given only the meat of unclean animals to eat, he shouted. Then he went to the Holy Tabernacle, took out the Thora scroll, and carried it round the synagogue, singing the song of the Spanish princess Melisselda. And, when some of those present looked wonderingly at him, he explained that the song was in the same category as the Psalms and the Song of Solomon, but that he alone as Messiah understood its secret meaning.

The only man who at last ventured to challenge him was Benveniste. Stepping up to him he asked him what irrefutable proofs he could produce that he really was the Messiah. Sabbatai answered vaguely and avoided the danger of becoming involved in a public dispute with one of the cleverest scholars in Ismir. In any case what need was there to do so seeing that he could answer by a show of power? Proudly throwing back his head he answered Benveniste with the same terrible curse that had been pronounced against himself years before in the same place—the great ban. Whereupon he had Benveniste thrown out of the synagogue by his followers and shouted out that he would have to apologize to him on the morrow, otherwise he would make him eat camel-flesh. This incident seems to have satiated for awhile his lust for excesses, and he merely called upon a few individuals to pronounce the name of God in full. Then he left the synagogue. His followers accompanied him, deeply impressed by the power of the Messiah and the mysterious significance of his activities. They were not scholars. Proofs and quotations were not the breath of life to them, and they were all the more ready to accept what they could hear and see. The incident in the Portuguese synagogue led to an enor-

mous increase in Sabbatai's following, for he was now joined by those who began to feel afraid of his power over the masses.

Aaron de la Papa was the first to grasp the trend of events, and he fled by night from Ismir in order to carry on the struggle against Sabbatai from a distance. With him Sabbatai's last opponent in the city, at least as far as the Jews were concerned, disappeared from the scene; for if any still remained who were hostile to him they did not dare to show it. A long procession of people now presented themselves before him with gifts and protestations of devotion, their main object being to curry favour with him as one in possession of power.

Nevertheless there still remained the charge timidly advanced against him by his friends that by his behaviour in the Portuguese synagogue he had desecrated the Sabbath Day. And a letter addressed to the community arrived from la Papa, who was staying somewhere in the neighbourhood, in which he pointed out that it was the Messiah above all who should uphold and fulfil the Law and not in any circumstances infringe it. Thus, on this ground alone, this native of Ismir could not be the Messiah. Sabbatai merely shrugged his shoulders and categorically announced that he stood wholly above the Law, and that his actions possessed a significance beyond the comprehension of petty minds.

Among these petty minds he included la Papa, whom he declared to be unworthy of his exalted post. On that same day, the ninth of Tevet, December 17, 1665, he issued a decree deposing Aaron de la Papa from his office and appointing as his successor Benveniste, the man

who had tried to persuade the secret conference to condemn Sabbatai to death and whom Sabbatai had insulted by calling him a swine and a camel and against whom he had pronounced the great Cherem. Was it a mistake? Or was it a grand and gracious gesture? No! It was merely an odd example of Sabbataian policy. While he may have been satisfied with the apparent success of his storming of the synagogue, he nevertheless afterwards had an uncomfortable feeling that the vulgar abuse of his adversaries was hardly compatible with the dignity of the Messiah and he was anxious to set the matter right if he could. An opportunity occurred when his friends asked him why he had insulted a scholar of such repute by calling him a camel, a *gamal*. With a smartness which could be accepted and tolerated only by an Age which, owing to lack of real experiences, had made juggling with words its main intellectual interest in life, Sabbatai declared that his friends were again putting a false interpretation on what he had said. The word he had used was not *gamal* but *Ge'mul*, meaning reward or recompense, a play on the idea so familiar to the Jews of *Ge'miluth chassadim*, one who does good and is repaid according to his deserts.

Needless to say, his friends gladly accepted this far-fetched explanation, and may have felt somewhat ashamed of themselves for their limited powers of understanding. But still more surprising was the fact that Benveniste should have resolved to forget the insults hurled at him and to accept this interpretation of them. Negotiations had taken place between him and Sabbatai, the nature of which was not known. But the result confirmed Sabbatai's extraordinary capacity for dealing with

men and winning them over to his side. The next day Benveniste took up his stand in the street and when Sabbatai appeared at the head of the solemn procession which daily marched through the city, he cried out, "Brethren, behold the true Messiah!" Thus was Sabbatai amply rewarded for his diplomacy and a formidable opponent was turned into a friend. The people cheered for joy when they found that this religious leader had joined them and had restored peace to the community. The city was now entirely in Sabbatai's hands, and any who were still hostile did not dare to show their faces. At a solemn public ceremony Sabbatai installed Benveniste in his office—a patent proof of the absolute power he enjoyed.

Everything seemed to turn to his advantage, not because he deserved it, but because the Age and the people in it were eagerly stretching out their hands for what he had to give. Thus he scored another triumph when eventually his most bitter enemy, Chaim Pegna, came over to his side. What threats, attacks and persecution had been unable to obtain from this determined opponent, was secured by a shattering experience he underwent. On escaping from the synagogue, he entered his own house and found his two daughters lying on the floor. They were trembling and writhing in agony and foaming at the mouth. At first he thought they were ill or had even been poisoned, but he was eventually forced to the conclusion that they were in the throes of a fit of religious ecstasy and were prophesying as though they belonged to an Age of miracles. One of them said quite plainly, "I see the wise man, Sabbatai Zevi, sitting on a throne in heaven with a crown on his head!"

Confronted by this communication from the realm of the unconscious, Pegna laid down his arms. Evidence that surged up from such subterranean depths of human emotion and feeling could not serve any other purpose than to proclaim the truth, and on the following day he went to Sabbatai's house and standing before him cried out, "Sabbatai Zevi is the true Messiah!" And they were reconciled. The people were deeply impressed to think that it should have been precisely the daughters of this heretic who had converted him. Later on, when the incident had been considerably embellished, it developed into a miraculous tale which falsely ascribed the conversion to Sabbatai himself. The story ran as follows: Joseph Pynas, a Jewish merchant from Leghorn, overheard some Turks saying that they were going to make the behaviour of the Jews an excuse for plundering them. Whereupon Pynas went to his creditors and asked them to pay him before the Turks took everything. But the fact that the fellow had so little confidence in the Messiah vexed Sabbatai and he ordered his followers to give him a good thrashing and prove to him that the Messiah was not afraid of the Turks. When Pynas saw the mob surging round his house, he was overcome with fear and terror and fell to the ground as though he were dead. The people thought he really was dead and reported the fact to Sabbatai. The latter, who meanwhile had regretted the order he had given, went to the delinquent's house and with a touch of his silver fan restored Pynas to consciousness, or, as the people maintained, brought him back to life. Even if this story does not relate to Pegna and his conversion, it con-



SABBATAI ENTHRONED

firm the reports of the methods by which Sabbatai rid himself of his enemies and won adherents.

The religious ecstasy into which Pegna's daughters fell was not an isolated incident. Many similar events are recorded, as inevitably happens when in exceptionally difficult circumstances the spiritual and material life of a people is imperfectly fused, when the weight of centuries begins to lift from the narrow confines of their faith and when an unusually pronounced gift for the understanding and experiencing of religious phenomena is stimulated to its utmost limits by the dazzling semblance of reality and fulfilment. Men, women, and even children fell into a state of rapture. Four hundred people are said to have begun to prophesy and predict the future about this time. Among them there were probably many in whom a hysterical desire to make themselves conspicuous played a greater part than any genuine and profound feeling of exaltation. The rest were probably the victims of a spiritual influence which agitated and terrified not only themselves but all their contemporaries. There are numberless reports about such people, and it may be to the point to quote one or two.

Ricaud, for instance, who was at that time English consul in Ismir, reports, "Over four hundred men and women actually prophesied the advent of Sabbatai's kingdom. Even children who could hardly lisp pronounced the name of Sabbatai, the Messiah and Son of God, quite clearly. Those advanced in years fainted away and, foaming at the mouth, prophesied the redemption and approaching salvation of the Israelites and described visions

in which they saw Zion, and Sabbatai enthroned in triumph."

Very similar, though full of moralizing, is an anonymous German document of the period: "Aye, even children who can hardly lisp have been known to pronounce the name of Sabbatai, the Messiah and Son of God, quite plainly. For the Lord seems to have decreed and the Devil seems to have given the power so to deceive these people, that for awhile their children were possessed and different voices could be heard issuing from their bodies. But those who were grown up began to fall in swoons to the floor and to foam at the mouth and to speak of the salvation and future happiness of the Israelites, and to declare that they had seen visions of the lion of Judah and of Sabbatai Zevi's triumph. If these things were really so, they can have come about only through the wiles of the Devil, as the Jews themselves subsequently admitted. . . ."

Even Coenen, the interested eye-witness of all these events in Ismir, could not help admitting that events were taking place all round him which, as an evangelical theologian, he could only regard as a fulfilment of the prophecy in Joel: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Where the ecstasies seemed to him genuine he says, "*Inder daet es is dit werck niet anders geweest dan of een konst des Duyvels.*" And where he has his suspicions he says, "*Men koster genoegsaem een gemaektheyt in mercken, gelijk in de Quakers van England.*"

A prophecy of this kind was reported by Baruch de

Arezzo, and ascribed by him to a certain Jeshurun; it consisted of a stammering, incoherent chain of words repeated again and again as if prompted by some internal spasm, and interspersed with quotations from the daily prayers: "O God, I heard Thy call! The King, the King of Kings shall rule to all eternity. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. The King has been crowned with a crown, even our King, Sabbatai Zevi. God protect Israel! Our prayers have been heard. From the depths have I cried. A great joy! Let Him who now liveth be praised! Bring forth the crown of our King. Woe to him that believeth not that he is chosen! Blessed be he that hath the good fortune to live in this Age! A divine song of blessing to every man that believeth in God! Hear us, O God, and deliver us! They have already given him the crown. His kingdom shall endure for ever. Thank God, for He is good! God the truth. Messiah the truth. Sabbatai Zevi the truth. May great joy reign among ye! Open thy hands! God is Master. As God returneth from the captivity of Zion, may great joy reign among the Jews! Thank the Lord of Heaven, for he hath given us a King. Woe to him that believeth not in Him! The divine Star of our Kingdom hath arisen. God, I and my life stand before Thee. Like an angel have I called unto Thee. Glory be to him that cometh in His name! God will repay thee in the day of sorrow. Truth, truth, truth! Help us, O God, in Thy mercy! There is no evil passion. God heard my prayer. . . ." And so on endlessly, everything four times, five times repeated, in the pregnant, stirring idiom of the Hebrew tongue.

In the midst of these tumults in Ismir, the Jews lived

in such isolation among themselves, so lost in the contemplation of what seemed to them important, that with grand indifference they neglected the ordinary concerns of their daily life. Their enthusiasm did not make them forget that the dawn of the Messianic era made special important demands on their spiritual preparedness, and as they were in earnest about their faith, they devoted themselves with stupendous zeal to the fulfilment of their religious duties. They knew that man's sin against God, his fellow-creatures, and the community, the sin which is the embodiment of all that petty egotism which makes him undignified and lacking in goodwill and love towards his neighbour, his relations, and the world at large, is the source and origin of all strife, unhappiness, and suffering. It had to be stopped, paid for, and expiated. The idea lying at the root of the sacred festivals of that year, the idea of atonement, for the understanding of which merely as an idea these people deserve a special place in history, was now to be translated into reality. And they strove for it by all the means their traditions had taught them, by penance in every shape and form. Men, women, and children prayed and fasted, sometimes to such an exaggerated degree that the body broke down and the penitent died. They subjected themselves to every kind of privation and mortification of the flesh. They performed their symbolic ablutions every day, even in midwinter in the icy cold sea-water. And in order to make sure that all souls still unborn should become incarnate, children were married to each other in ever greater numbers, so that the last obstacle to the dawn of the day of salvation might be removed. Out of their poverty or out of their

abundance they gave to those who had less than themselves, or to the Messiah, or to Jerusalem. They neglected their trades and callings. They did not wish to earn more money, for everything material would henceforward cease to have any sense or purpose. They began to sell their houses, shops and utensils, since they could not take them with them on the march to Jerusalem.

They struggled with all their might to win spiritual salvation, and occasionally one among them would have a sudden sense of freedom and of having been forgiven. Their joy was unbounded. They seemed to have entered a new sphere and to be standing on the threshold of a world in which the ideas of good and evil hitherto prevalent no longer applied. In everything they now did they were without sin, whether it was singing or dancing, luxuriously feasting or freely indulging their sexual appetite, the gratification of which had hitherto been rigorously hedged round by the law and made an act of religious sanctity. They were without law and therefore unbridled. Salvation made them behave as later on they behaved when the collapse of the whole movement reduced them to the depths of despair. Then, too, they became dissipated and unbridled, because they imagined that salvation could arise only from the abysmal depths of sin.

The other people of Ismir and the European merchants were interested, though on the whole inactive, spectators of all that was going on. Their religious sympathies with the Jews compelled them to adopt an attitude of reserve. Nor did they at first imagine that the movement would assume a more serious form or last for any length of time. But eventually they found their material interests af-

fect. Trade was suffering. Brokers, interpreters, artisans, merchants, boatmen, fisherfolk, and craftsmen had ceased to work, with the result that commerce was paralysed, and as people could not be forced to work, means had to be found to remove the cause of their idleness. The Turks in particular feared that the movement might lead to even more serious disturbances, more especially as the deposition of the Sultan was already being openly discussed.

At last a deputation of the leading citizens presented themselves to the Kadi and begged him to take steps to restore trade and prevent disturbances. The Kadi was well aware of all that was going on and disapproved, but so far he had assumed a tolerant attitude because he did not know what to do. The situation was extremely awkward, for he could not have the whole of the Jewish population arrested, and if he shut up their Messiah the Jews would storm the prison. Nevertheless he promised to summon the Rabbis of the community to appear before him on the following day. They obeyed, with Benveniste at their head, somewhat agitated and uneasy, but confident that the state of affairs allowed of their making a stand. The Kadi was quick to perceive this, and it did not conduce to make things any easier for him. He made a long speech to the Rabbis in which he expressed all his doubts regarding the popular movement. Possibly it was justified, possibly not. In any case, he himself was not yet convinced that Sabbatai Zevi was the Messiah, though he did not wish lightly to dismiss his claims. For, after all, the Turks, too, were believers, and had ancestors and

prophets in common with the Jews. "We are not disobedient to God's laws," he declared. "We know that at the end of the world a Messiah must come to whom we shall bow. Prove to us that it is he whom you have chosen. Then we shall be ready to acknowledge him. Bring him here. I will test him. I will even set him on the throne myself. But if you do not convince me . . ." A number of lame threats followed which he did not mean to be taken very seriously.

He did not expect Sabbatai to come any more than the latter intended to answer his summons. The Rabbis were somewhat embarrassed by the orders they had to convey to their Messiah. The people, on the other hand, were filled with enthusiasm, for they hoped an opportunity would be provided for witnessing stupendous miracles. Sabbatai's secret opponents rejoiced also, but from different motives. Large crowds gathered in front of Sabbatai's house, among whom the resolute working-folk, who were ready to serve him as diligently with their hearts as with their heavy fists, were again conspicuous. In these circumstances Sabbatai was in a position to direct events as he pleased. But he solved the problem in an extremely simple and, as the sequel proved, enduring manner. Instead of obeying the Kadi and repeating in his presence miracles which according to hearsay he had long ago performed, he made a long speech to the people hinting that behind the scenes he was being persecuted by a ravenous devil whom it would be necessary to appease before peace could be restored.

This was a hint which his rich supporters readily un-

derstood and to which they quickly responded. Instead of giving money to the Messiah they took it to the Kadi, who accepted it.

When this became known to the Turks, they were extremely angry and again presented themselves before the Kadi and gave him their ultimatum, insisting that he should take steps against the Jews. He defended himself by saying that his acceptance of money from the latter did not necessarily mean that he would refrain from taking steps against them. But he refused to embark upon violent measures for which he could not accept responsibility, since the Jews were in a majority in the city, and he was afraid of provoking an insurrection with which he knew he would be unable to deal. And he could comfort himself with the reflection that for the time being at least he had intimidated the Jews. Nevertheless he promised the Turks to send a report immediately to Constantinople and ask for instructions. And as a further proof of good faith and at the same time to free himself of all responsibility, he ordered Sabbatai to set out for Constantinople within three days to answer in person to the Grand Vizier.

Sabbatai took no notice of this order. His position with regard to the Kadi had meanwhile been finally and unmistakably defined by fresh reports of miracles which were circulated round the town. According to them, as the result of the Kadi's recent action against the Messiah, the patriarch Abraham, the prophet Elijah, and Mordecai, the nursing-father of Esther, had appeared to the Kadi in the night. Elijah had been supported on a pillar of fire. The Kadi had immediately risen from

his bed and invited the three to be seated. They did so, and the pillar of fire took up its position between the Kadi and his visitors, radiating such a terrific heat that it threatened to burn the Kadi, and he implored the prophet to moderate the glow. Elijah immediately complied, but solemnly warned the Kadi not to take steps against the Jews or to allow them to be insulted. The Kadi promised and he kept his word.

The people saw such strange and wonderful things happening all round that miracles seemed to be taking place everywhere. They were constantly seeing visions or coming into contact with strange phenomena. One man, for instance, saw a pillar of fire in a field in the middle of the day; another saw the same thing at night. A third saw the moon emerge from the clouds enveloped in flames. Others saw the heavens open and reveal a fiery gateway in which stood a man with a crown on his head and his features were those of Sabbatai Zevi. As he was walking along the beach another man saw a star fall into the sea from the sky and then rise up and return whence it came. But all these incidents seemed quite credible, for they fulfilled the prophecies contained in Joel: "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

This readiness to believe in the miraculous, and the somewhat morbid state of mind engendered thereby, inevitably led to the appearance of a figure which is one of the most lovable ever created by the historical traditions of a people and one most tenderly cherished in their im-

agination—that of the great prophet Elijah who lived in the time of King Ahab. To the Jews Elijah was not dead; he had merely been removed from earth and taken in a chariot of fire up to heaven, whence for centuries he had made his invisible presence everywhere felt. To this day the Jewish child is fascinated by the allegory when on the first two evenings of the Passover celebrations a place is left empty at the table. A glass of wine is placed before the seat, and in the middle of the singing and reading the door is opened for Elijah to come in. He is supposed to enter, drink the wine without being seen and bless the feast by his presence, just as he is always present when a Jewish child is accepted into the covenant through the rite of circumcision. The Passover serves to commemorate the emancipation from Egypt and is held in the hope of another exodus to the Holy Land, to which brief reference is made in the final words of the service: "*Le'shanah habah bi'jerushalaim*—Next year we shall be in Jerusalem." And for this great day of salvation, the day of the Messiah, Elijah, according to tradition, is the forerunner. When he appeared, the great day was at hand.

He was therefore due to appear now and numbers of people declared they had met him. One woman had seen him in a dream, another had met a strange old man on a Friday and he had begged her for alms. It was Elijah! He appeared in all manner of shapes and forms and was often quite invisible, and only showed that he was present by something that happened. But as people knew that he was there every table had a seat left empty for him and food put before him of which he partook without there being any visible diminution in the amount. A certain

man, oppressed by this invisible presence, ordered the table to remain laid overnight, and on the following morning was gratified to find that the wine had all been drunk. By way of thanks Elijah had filled the goblet with olive oil. The report of what had happened in Solomon Carmona's house was spread far and wide. One day he invited some friends to the midday meal; as they were sitting at table one of them looked up at the beautiful bright pewter plates decorating the wall, and a beatific smile illumined his features. He rose and made deep obeisances in the direction of the wall. For in the shining surface of the pewter plates he saw Elijah. The others also rose and bowed.

Such incidents made an extraordinary impression on the faithful, which was only increased by an equally marvellous event reported from Constantinople which led to tangible results. Apparently a Jew in that city was walking through the streets when he met a man whom he took to be a Turk. The stranger addressed him, whereupon he recognized him to be Elijah. The prophet exhorted him to observe the laws of the Thora more strictly, and called his attention to the regulation in the Book of Leviticus which reads, "Thou shalt not trim the corners of thy hair, thou shalt not spoil the points of thy beard." It was one of those rules which prevented Jews from imitating the people among whom they lived. He also reminded him of the instructions laid down in the Book of Numbers. "Bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue." The garment was named after these

borders, the *Arba kanforth*, the sight of which was a constant reminder to the wearers of God and His covenant. The Jew went home and immediately wrote to Ismir describing what had happened. Copies of the letter were sent all over the country and owing to the fact that it had been inspired by Elijah immediately led to the law being strictly observed. A detailed account is given of the result in a contemporary document. "Since they had shaved their heads after the Turkish fashion, they regarded it as not only vexatious but also injurious to health to allow their hair to grow again. So they allowed a long lock of hair to grow on either side of their head, the points of which projected from beneath their caps, and distinguished them from the Kophrim (their unbelieving opponents)."

Elijah now began to be present among the people at every moment of the day. When the Sabbath was over the people poured out wine for him in their houses because he liked it and had the power to add to their prosperity. Some secretly poured a few drops of this wine into their purses. In preparation for the prophet's arrival, the Rabbis ordered their flocks to set about cleansing their houses at once, and to leave the Hebrew books lying about open. A certain man had an extremely beautiful dog to which he was much attached, but he turned him out because he did not wish to have any unclean animal in the house when Elijah came. On one occasion, when, as the custom was in those days, Sabbatai was invited to attend a circumcision, he begged the people on entering the house not to begin the ceremony until he gave the sign. They obediently waited half an hour, until he did so. Subsequently, when

he was asked the reason, he replied that on first entering the house, Elijah had not been present, but had appeared half an hour later.

Sceptical chroniclers of the day, and of a later generation, poured untold scorn on these people and their faith in Elijah. They would have done better to refrain. For to the Jews of the period the presence of their prophet was a profound reality, just as sixteen hundred years previously the drinking of wine at the marriage ceremony in Cana of Galilee was a profound reality to those present. It is only arrogant and petty minds that venture to judge or explain miracles. They cannot alter a spiritual experience.

The events just described all occurred in Ismir within the space of a week and, if we may speak of conscious aims in such a connexion, served the purpose of officially inaugurating the kingdom of the Messiah. The tenth of Tevet arrived, the day which from time immemorial had been sacred to the memory of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. On it Sabbatai confronted the people with a great idea which they were able to grasp. The moment when the Jewish people were coming into their own again, he declared, was no time for mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem, for they were on the point of rebuilding the city. Thus the tenth of Tevet was no longer to be observed.

In addition to this regal pronouncement on the part of Sabbatai himself, and complementing it, were the decrees and edicts promulgated by Primo, Sabbatai's "secretary." To all the communities in Asia, Africa, and Europe he announced the dawn of the Age of Salvation, and told

them how to prepare for it. He organized their devotions as Ercole of Ferrara had done in the case of his city in the days of Savonarola, with this difference, that Primo introduced innovations and altered the traditional order of prayers. He thus tried to direct the daily lives of the people to fit the new state of affairs. The tenth of Tevet occurred only once a year, but people said their prayers three times a day. And thus to the stirring figure of the Messiah he added what was even more stirring and durable, the reality of a daily routine.

But even this change was accepted with such alacrity and speed, particularly in Ismir, that almost on the following day the people were ready for fresh developments. They could not tolerate any standstill, and could not understand why there should be any waiting. Such a glorious beginning must surely continue on its fiery way till it reached its consummation. The King of Kings was among them and was expected to perform unheard-of miracles in true kingly fashion. As soon as a miracle was known and had become familiar it seemed insignificant. To satisfy the people something that had never happened before in their history was required, and lo and behold! their hope was gratified. For between the eleventh and the twenty-second of Tevet (December 19-30, 1665), Sabbatai divided up the world, and distributed crowns and kingdoms among his brothers and his closest friends. Isaac Silveira, who had secretly responded the first time Sabbatai pronounced the Holy Name in full, he made King David. His great advocate, Abraham Jachini, to whom he owed the discovery of the written prophecy con-

cerning him, he rewarded for his regal wisdom with the crown of Solomon. His early friend and great benefactor, Raphael Joseph Chelebi, was made King Joash. Solomon Carmona, at whose table the prophet Elijah had appeared, was given the title of King Ahab. His messenger Mat-tatha Bloch, was made King Asa, while his erstwhile adversary, Chaim Pegna, was dignified with the title of King Jeroboam. He raised his brother Elijah to the rank of King of the King of Kings, meaning King of Turkey. His brother Joseph he appointed King of Kings in Judah with the sub-title of Emperor of the Romans.

He maintained that this was no arbitrary distribution of crowns and kingdoms. On the contrary, to every one who received an honour, he explained just which soul it was that, in the course of its wanderings, had entered into him and become incarnate. Altogether he appointed twenty-six kings and princes; not one of them entertained the smallest doubt regarding the validity of the proceeding and his eventual accession to power. Those who could not expect the immediate realization of their hopes, added to their names the honorary title they had been given and had documents drawn up describing their appointments, and seals made with which they sealed their letters. There was one poor man, named Abraham Rubio, who lived on charity and whom Sabbatai had named King Josiah, in acknowledgment of his faithful support, whose friends and acquaintances were of opinion that money rather than a future crown would have been a much more suitable reward for his services. And they importuned him and offered him large sums to sell his kingdom. But he re-

fused all these offers with a smile. Who would exchange a certain glorious future that was near at hand for a few gold pieces?

But even this division of the world, which was an unparalleled proceeding, was not regarded by the people as the consummation but merely as a preparatory measure. The allotment of these crowns amounted to so many promises, which had to be kept if the whole business was not to prove a delusion and a snare, a mere empty gesture. But the sovereigns who belonged to the Age that was passing away were still sitting on their thrones and exercising power. Therefore this power must be taken from them that room might be made for the future kings, and Nathan Ghazati's prophecy be fulfilled. Consequently Sabbatai Zevi's first step should be to go to Constantinople in person and depose the Sultan. Otherwise how could history run its course?

This was the most fateful and decisive moment in the Messiah's life. There was no internal or external force that could enable him to escape this demand on the part of the people or this logical sequel to his conduct. He had accepted Nathan and his prophecies, and had not thrust aside the people with their passionate desire for miracles and salvation, but had made himself the centre of their hopes. Thus he himself was responsible for their demands which he was now called upon to satisfy. His fate had mastered him and was forcing his footsteps, demanding action and not merely resolutions. The resolutions had been forced upon him, but his real obligation, which was action, was fraught with grievous danger. In Ismir he was supported by a large body of people, but Constantinople

was a distant, strange, and hostile city. In Ismir crowds approached him as suppliants; in Constantinople he himself would be a suppliant. In Ismir he was offered and given power; in Constantinople he would have to wrest it by his own personal efforts.

But whether danger lurked ahead or not, he no longer had any choice, and therefore announced, as he could not help doing, that he would go to Constantinople in the course of the month. It was the last possible moment. The year 1665 was drawing to a close. The year 1666, which he himself had accepted as the Messianic year, was on the threshold, and the Age which he himself had called into being stood before him demanding decisive action.

The people heard the news with profound faith and joy. But their joy was turned to tense expectation and they held their breath when Sabbatai on the twenty-second of Tevet, December 30, 1665, boarded a saic, a small sailing vessel, to set out for Constantinople.

CHAPTER IX

Echo

THE news of events in Ismir gradually spread all round like waves of sound. But the circulation of the tidings had none of the medieval slowness that might have been expected from the conditions prevalent at the time. Jews were wandering all over the world bearing letters and messages, and when a messenger stopped to rest in one place another would set out with a copy of his reports to the next. Moreover, Primo had taken care to see that two official messengers should be sent out into the world and they constituted moving headquarters, so to speak, for the dissemination and collection of news. In this they were helped by the innumerable private letters which found their way from the East to Europe, the contents of which were reported both by word of mouth and in writing, constituting another source of information. And as the Jewish world in the East was affected not only by the news itself but also by the movement as an actual fact, another extremely valuable source of reliable information came into being in the shape of reports sent by European merchants and the political representatives of foreign states who were naturally concerned with the economic interests of their respective countries.

At first they had not paid much attention to the move-

ment, but in a surprisingly short space of time what was taking place began to affect their interests, not merely because, as we have already shown, there was a shortage of labour, but because even the Jewish merchants had grown disinclined for business. They were reluctant to enter upon any fresh undertakings, and were calling in their debts and beginning to wind up their affairs. Even those Oriental Jews who did not believe in the Messiah inevitably felt the force of the movement and were extremely careful about committing themselves, with the result that European trade in the East was seriously affected and merchants and diplomatic representatives began to follow and study events, gathering data, which they forwarded to Europe. A certain Herr Plettenberg, who is described as the imperial representative in Dresden, remarked, "The reason why our merchants in Ismir have not yet told us anything about this King is that, owing to the fact that the Jews did not believe in him, he remained for a long time in retirement both in Ismir and Constantinople. But now he is going to Constantinople, and next June the redemption of Israel will be proclaimed to the whole world. Other reports have now come in from Venice and Vienna to the effect that Sabbatai Zevi has already reached Constantinople and has been respectfully received there."

Monsieur de Chaumont, the French Ambassador, also informed his Government of the "excitement about the Messiah who is shortly expected. It is said that the Sultan has agreed to hand over the whole of Palestine to him. The majority of the Jews have stopped work and are preparing to migrate to Jerusalem. At first we laughed at

all this, but apparently the matter now threatens to become serious." The French consul in Ismir, writing to Rosano in Leghorn on the subject of this Messiah, says, "The Turks have great respect for him and our country is still rather anxious about it. God grant the affair will do us no harm!" The Signoria of Venice instructed Bel-lario, their diplomatic representative, to keep them well informed. The Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Savoy are also mentioned among those who had written accounts of the matter sent to them. In due course, these reports which had at first been compressed into the compass of a letter, developed into regular treatises, small monographs, and eventually fair-sized books.

As a matter of fact, the Age already provided ample material for such works if only owing to the effect of the Sabbataian movement on the Jews in Turkey. The farther away a place was from the centre of the movement, the more exaggerated were the reports current in it, though this in no way affected the intensity of belief. But the opposition was also proportionately more violent, since they were not immediately silenced by an overwhelming majority of Sabbatai's followers. But, in the excitement and emotionalism that prevailed, it was impossible for anybody to maintain a neutral attitude. The Jews in Turkey were divided into supporters and opponents, Meaminim and Kofrim, and bitter fights occurred between the two parties in which everything was regarded as justified. Jacob Ashkenazi, whose descendants were afterwards virulent anti-Sabbataians, is actually said to have pronounced sentence of death on the opponents of the Messiah. But, because they had something positive

to defend and began with terrifying earnestness to prepare for the fulfilment of their destiny, the Sabbataians in the end gained the upper hand and forced the Kofrim to keep silence and to be careful what they did.

First and foremost they practised penance—penance in the special form and special sense given to it by the Hebrew language, in which the same word, *Te'shuvah*, means penance, return, and response. Thus what they did was to respond to the call of conscience, and return to the state of innocence; and, true to primitive custom, they therefore mortified the flesh. The programme followed by the Jews of Salonica was repeated everywhere and may be regarded as typical. The majority of them there had long been conversant with the teaching of the Kabala, and particularly with the precepts and regulations of the practical branch of it. They were less enthusiastic than the people of Ismir, but they were harder, stricter, and more fanatical. They were tremendously in earnest about penance and flocked to their teachers to confess their sins. Four Chachamim were constantly occupied hearing these confessions and deciding what penance should be inflicted. But, as a rule, this did not satisfy the penitents, who did far more by way of penance than was demanded of them. They fasted until they reached the last extreme of physical exhaustion. They had themselves buried in snow and broken ice, and waded out into the sea and stood in the water until they almost sank. They poured hot wax over their bodies and allowed themselves to be buried up to their necks and to remain thus until they swooned. In frenzies of mysterious flagellantism, they beat each other with scourges and nettles. They wore bunches of nettles

under their clothes against their naked skins. There was such a demand for this form of self-mortification, that for a wide area round the city no more nettles were to be found, and they had to be brought in at great expense from a distance. Their penitential exercises became ever more gloomy and depressing. Thus some lay for hours with heavy stones on their chests. Others had themselves stoned as a sign that they deserved it, and by a hundred and one symbolic acts of terrifying ingenuity, they gave expression to their sorrow for their sins and their hope of living a pure and innocent life in future.

And they gave alms without ceasing, bestowing freely of their plenty to an ever-growing circle of poor. They kept their shops closed, or if they did open them it was only to get rid of their goods and superfluous household furniture at any price. They imposed a strict law upon themselves not to enter into any commercial transactions with Jews whether by buying or selling. Property was not allowed to change hands among themselves. This was forbidden under threat of a ban as well as fines and corporal punishment, since it meant that the man who did business in this way did not believe in the Messiah and wished to collect wealth secretly in preparation for more peaceful times. They also married their children in large numbers; it is reported that as many as seven or eight hundred such marriages took place. When the movement reached its zenith the people of Salonica were reduced to a state of abject poverty and final spiritual readiness.

Without adopting this gloomy form of preparation, though filled with tense expectation and eagerness, the next to respond to the inflammatory call were the Italian

Jews. The city of Leghorn took the lead, and again confirmed its position as the chief centre for Jews coming from the East and particularly for alms-gatherers from Palestine. Moreover, as the city from which Sarah had been summoned to become Queen, it regarded itself as particularly important and the Sabbataians immediately gained the upper hand in it.

They did not find matters so simple in Venice with its highly intelligent, cultured and sceptical population, and its entire absence of fantastic Oriental imagination. Until 1649 Leon Modena had lived in the city and exercised considerable influence. An infant prodigy, he became a polyhistor when he grew up and his position as Rabbi did not prevent him from earning money by means of all kinds of intellectual activity, and squandering it cheerfully at cards or dice. And for this very reason he was an opponent of the Kabala. Another enlightened Jew who was extremely critical of his co-religionists, was Modena's friend and colleague Luzzatto. But at this period, the spiritual life of the city was guided by a convinced devotee of the Kabala, Moses Zacuto, who had been a fellow-student of Baruch Spinoza. He had left Amsterdam with the object of making a pilgrimage to Palestine, but had remained in Venice on the way. He was deeply interested in the Sabbataian movement, but the leaders of the community had no wish to be responsible for a blind faith in it. So they decided to institute inquiries in Constantinople, where they believed reliable information had already been collected. The correspondence, as described by Baruch de Arezzo, is a typical document of the period.

"When in our day the world from all the four corners

thereof, from east to west, and from the north to the sea, is split in two, and falleth into groups and parties, and a great noise is heard and cometh to our ears, telling us of our salvation, and the people are divided into those who believe and those who do not believe, why should we not come forward and ask to hear the truth from him who knoweth it? Perchance he will be able to tell us whether the matter is grievous and unworthy of attention. In any case, the whole world is in travail and groaning in great fear and tribulation, and that a calamity may not occur—which God forbid!—we have hearkened to the voice of our community and its great leaders, and hereby send these humble lines to the camp of your holiness to discover whether one day we may not have good news and learn about the matter from head to foot. If the voices we have heard are but a tower hanging in mid-air, we shall know that we should do well to calm the people of our community and comfort them in their sorrow when their dream falls like scales from their eyes. But if *he* is the man, even though he may not hasten to come to us, we shall wait with confidence, for such is our lot and our salvation hangeth thereon. If, however, there is some doubt about the matter, pray inform us why you think so. The eyes of all Israel are directed on you in Constantinople. These lines are written by the pupils of the holy school of Venice on the eighth of Adar, 426.”

Constantinople replied under cover of a commercial communication. This they did out of caution in case the bearer of the letter was seized by the Turks. “The fair words from your hands dictated by the Thora and the Law, your sacred pages, have reached us. You ask for

information concerning *Nozath haisim*, the goatskins which Rabbi Israel of Jerusalem has bought. But Satan fell among his brethren and said that as he had committed a great sin the business would end badly; he would find no purchaser for his goods and had already squandered the wealth of his whole family. So we looked into the matter and examined what Rabbi Israel had bought, for his goods are displayed here under our very eyes. We have come to the conclusion that they are very valuable; they are being purchased in every country, and whoever speaks ill of them will have to answer for it before the court. According to the view of experienced merchants, who have examined the quality and value of the goods, a great profit will yet be made out of them. But we must wait until the great fair-day comes. With God's help it will come next year, and then the goods will be sold for precious blood; for the hand of God is in it. We have examined the ultimate reasons and the cause of causes have we gone into, and tested, and we say that the truth is with Rabbi Israel. Our examination has proved this beyond a doubt, and your duty as priests is to give effect to this truth in a becoming manner and God will establish peace between the contending parties so that you will flourish in all you do and not doubt any longer about the matter; for Rabbi Israel is devoted to God. In order that the truth may be made known to all, we have written this letter and endorsed it; everything in it is correct, true, certain, and sure. Yomtov Chenaniah Niniakar, Moses Sagis, Moses Galante, Abraham Jachini, Kelev Shemuel."

The arrival of this letter in Venice was the signal for fights to occur between the supporters and the opponents

of Sabbatai Zevi. They were violent but brief. Where Zacuto's authority was not sufficient, Sabbatai's supporters disposed of their adversaries by having recourse to violence. When Sabbatai heard this he ordered Primo to express his thanks to the community and with astonishing frankness both the Messiah and his secretary commended the use of violence as an argument in favour of the movement. To the messenger from Venice, Rabbi Moses ben Nehemiah, Primo gave the following reply: "I heard singing from the ends of the earth when that man came to me, and told me about the inhabitants of Venice, how strong and reliable they were and how their hearts glowed with fire." And, referring to the striking of one of their opponents on the Sabbath Day, Primo gives the Sabbataians a special tribute of praise. "I hasten to praise you because you have done good; for according to the word of Sabbatai there can be no better way of keeping holy the Sabbath Day than the one these people have chosen." In a postscript to this letter, Sabbatai observes: "You have shown yourselves worthy. May you increase in might, for you have made firm the foundation of your faith. I will surely give unto you the full measure of reward which I shall mete out to all believers. Ye shall be repaid by the Lord of Peace and by me, Israel, your father, the bridegroom who cometh under the canopy, the spouse of the Thora." This is signed: "The man who is the divine Messiah, mighty as a lion, strong as a bear, the Lord's appointed, Sabbatai Zevi."

Sabbatai could allow himself the liberty of signing in this way. He could do so without giving offence. The movement had become so strong that it allowed of any

experiment being made. A systematic gathering together and leading of the masses would have had permanent results. To appreciate the compelling power of the idea, we have only to examine its effect on the Polish Jews. True, they were particularly interested in the movement, since they were the greatest victims of the physical suffering of the Age, and therefore most eager for salvation. Nevertheless, the alacrity with which they responded bears eloquent testimony to the suggestive power of the movement. They were enjoying a brief though anxious period of respite, taking breath after a time of terrible martyrdom. They had barely escaped with their lives, and yet they were all suddenly able to raise their heads again. They proclaimed the change in their destiny with such truculent assurance, that the Christians about them were impressed and began not only to believe in the imminence of the change but also to feel anxious regarding the fate of their own Christian Messiah. And it was chiefly to silence these fears that Golyatovsky, a theologian of Kiev, wrote his book *The True Messiah*, in which he quite unintentionally became a chronicler of the existing state of affairs.

He says: "They left their hearths and homes. They abandoned their daily work and began to rave about a Messiah who would shortly take them to Jerusalem on a cloud. Many of them fasted for days at a time and even prevented their little children from eating, while in the severest cold of winter they bathed in the rivers murmuring extempore prayers. They looked haughtily down on the Christians and held their Messiah as a threat over their heads, saying, 'Only wait; soon we shall be your masters.'" Neither their Talmudic scholarship, nor their

habit of perpetually splitting hairs, nor their gradual estrangement from the primitive spirit of the Bible which had been going on for generations, saved them from credulously believing whatever they heard about the Messiah. Possibly the undue exercise of their logical and intellectual faculties had driven them to the other extreme and had made them accessible only to the emotional side of life, for among them the counter-movement against a too pedantic Kabalism and a too consistent Sabbataianism was founded on Hassidism.

Even France, with its comparatively small Jewish population, welcomed the Sabbataian idea. In Avignon, where the Jews were constantly exposed to the hateful, intolerant mishandling of the Popes and their officials, the community calmly and quietly drew the inevitable conclusions from the reports that had reached them, and in the spring of 1666 were ready to emigrate bag and baggage to Jerusalem.

In Paris, the excitement was not only great but also enduring. A contemporary document describes the conditions as follows: "They are gathering together under a man who, contrary to report, does not claim to be the Messiah but merely declares that he has been commissioned by God to gather the scattered nation together. . . . Abraham Perena, a rich Jew of this city, set out for Jerusalem with his family last month. He is said to have sold a country house valued at £3000 for a much smaller sum and furthermore to have agreed that the purchaser should not be called upon to pay a penny until he had convinced himself that the Jews had a King."

In England, both Jew and Christian responded to the movement, the former cautiously, the latter with something of the sporting spirit. The Jewish population of London was still small and of recent origin; there had been no official decision regarding their readmission, but they existed there in some numbers and formed a community at the head of which was Sasportas of whom more will be said. Hardly had they settled down in London, when the news that the Diaspora would shortly be at an end led to disputes between them. A contemporary report describes their mental attitude in a few telling words: "There are very few who believe in the movement though many may wish it were true." Truth to tell, the Puritans had forestalled them by fixing the Messianic year as 1666, and consequently the interest of the latter was limited to estimating how long the realization of the Jewish ideal would take. Regular bets were made, ten to one being laid on Sabbatai Zevi being made King of Jerusalem within two years. The settlement of such bets was, however, subject to the production of accurate documentary evidence valid in law.

There was no country in which the Jewish community could remain unaffected by the wave of excitement. In Vienna, where the Jews were protected and enjoyed a secure and prosperous position, the state of expectation and readiness was unusually great. In Moravia disturbances among the Jews became so serious that the lieutenant of the district, Count von Dietrichstein, was obliged to issue public proclamations to calm the people. The Jews in Hungary were said to be already removing the roofs from

their houses, while the Emir of Morocco was reported to have ordered a persecution of the Jews for making a public display of their eagerness to join their Messiah.

But the most enthusiastic and, in view of its spiritual causes, the most vital and valuable response to the Messianic tidings came from the two great Jewish centres of Amsterdam and Hamburg. In both places the material and spiritual life of the Jews was to a great extent shaped and influenced by the number of Spanish and Portuguese Jews among them. In Amsterdam, in particular, the Jews were no longer harassed by material anxieties and enjoyed a fairly flourishing position, while in other parts of Holland they were in possession of rights which put them almost on an equality with the rest of the citizens. In Hamburg they were still very far from reaching this ideal and were obliged to accept constraints which were often merely vexatious. On the other hand, in this city the population consisted chiefly of merchants living by the sea, a condition of affairs conducive to the production of broadmindedness and that tolerance which is based on reason. So here, too, the Jews found existence tolerable and full of hope for the future.

Nevertheless, as the news from the East reached them, they began to tremble and grow excited. For it resuscitated their secret Marranism. Their suffering had not been so cruel as that of the Polish Jews; it was more sublimated and therefore more fully equipped with the weapons of intellect. But in their heart of hearts they all believed in the return, and thus the tidings of the Messiah merely opened up a further stretch of the spiritual road along which they were already travelling; it was the logical

realization of their longing for home, the gratification of their yearning for peace and rest amid their own people. But in keeping with their spiritual past and their previous history and evolution, they did not accept the Messianic idea without its mystic implications, although they regarded it from a more worldly, concrete, and political point of view than the Oriental and Polish Jews. To the other Jews it was a fresh beginning; to them it was a continuation on a higher and more definite plane. And thus in their response they showed passionate joy and open enthusiasm rather than a gloomy desire for painful penitential exercises.

For some considerable time Amsterdam had been a centre where men of fine brains and eager hearts had been busying themselves with the ultimate meaning of the Jewish question, and the yearning of the Jews to have a national life of their own had manifested itself here again and again. They had by no means forgotten the fate of Uriel da Costa. A member of an old Marrano family, whose father was a strict Catholic, he one day awoke to a full appreciation of his ancestry and spiritual heritage. Whereupon he returned to Judaism of his own accord and fled to Amsterdam. In this city, the name of which the Marranos whispered under their breaths as almost synonymous with Paradise, he hoped to fulfil his destiny. But what he found there disappointed and troubled him. Was this Rabbinical structure the Judaism which his reading of the Bible had led him to expect? No! Impossible! And he ignored a development which seemed to him false and full of contradictions, and proceeded to live as his own interpretation of the Bible made him think fit.

But under the rule of a man like de Herrera, this was impossible, and a ban was pronounced against him. He could not endure this exclusion from his community for long, and, crawling back to the Cross, he was received once more into the bosom of the Church. But the rebel in him had not been subdued, and he began to doubt everything, even the immortality of the soul. His thesis on the subject was condemned and burnt. Once more he stood on the verge of ostracism, and, with defiance in his heart, he recanted. But this attitude of defiance on the part of a loving child again exposed him to the threat of a ban. And once more he bowed his head, but only because, as one who had been forced by spiritual distress to return home, he could not again face standing outside the gates. The ceremonies he had to go through to be acquitted once more were humiliating and debasing. He was forced to lie on the step of the synagogue and allow the faithful to walk over him one by one. This proved the last straw, and he immortalized his fate, his defiance, and his doubt in an essay entitled *An Example of Human Life*. Without waiting for others to accuse him of being a liar and a renegade, he shot himself in the year 1640.

A somewhat similar case is provided by Baruch Spinoza, though his scepticism took a somewhat different form and he did not suffer a like fate. He too was a member of a Marrano family and returned to the faith because he found his father's house too oppressively small and narrow. But he was not so much concerned with his own fate as with that of mankind at large, with spirit and truth, and it was not personal feeling that made him bow his head. Whereas Marranos were constantly arriving in Amsterdam

in order to be able to profess the Jewish faith, he renounced it as too narrow and, in his opinion, lacking the binding force of a universal religion. While Sabbatai Zevi was wandering about the East trying to prepare the way for a Messianic kingdom which should be a literal fulfilment of Jewish tradition, Spinoza was accused in 1656 of preaching false doctrine inimical to this tradition, and the great ban was pronounced against him. While the news was being spread in Amsterdam that Sabbatai had been proclaimed Messiah, he held aloof and maintained an objective and impartial attitude, and after an exhaustive examination of the pros and cons, declared that it might be quite possible for the Jews to take advantage of this favourable concatenation of circumstances and restore the Jewish kingdom.

The Amsterdam Jews were on this occasion in agreement with him, but their temperament and lot in life prevented them from emulating his cool objectivity. True, they could boast of many distinguished and reputable scholars, but the large leavening of Marrano poets among them both in the past and at that time lent a definite colour to their spiritual life, a decided tendency towards the emotional, the romantic, and the dreamy, and an eager acceptance of news and dramatic situations. The creations of these poets were by no means great, but poetizing in some shape or form was the breath of their nostrils. Ever since Manuel de Belmonte had founded their Academy of Poetry, they had prospered in every way. There were some extremely interesting and vital men among them, as, for instance, Fray Vicente de Rocamora, a monk of Valencia, who had once been confessor to the Infanta Maria, after-

wards Empress of Germany and a convinced anti-Semite. At this time he was a doctor, a parish official and a contented citizen of Amsterdam. There was also the Spanish officer Enrique Enriquez de Paz, who was burned in effigy because the authorities were unable to lay hands on his person. He returned to Judaism and wrote comedies in Amsterdam. There were many similar characters, and it is quite comprehensible that from sheer exuberance of spirit they should have responded to the advent of a Messiah. Their joy was like David's when he danced before the Ark of the Covenant. Sasportas, the great opponent of the movement, wrote as follows: "Amsterdam was in a state of wild excitement. Crowds of people surged along the streets dancing to the beat of drums. Even the synagogues were full of dancing people. They took the Thora scrolls in their beautifully embroidered covers out of their tabernacles and carried them into the streets, paying not the slightest heed to the disapproval and hostility of the Christian population, but everywhere proclaiming at the top of their voices the news that was pouring in, without being in the least discomfited by the mockery of the Christians."

Owing to its important commercial relations with distant parts of the world, Amsterdam had become a centre for the distribution of news, which was given out not only in the synagogues but above all in the Exchange, where the merchants used to meet daily and where all letters dealing with commercial matters were addressed. Those who were beginning to be anxious about developments and had again applied to their representatives in the East for inside information as to whether Sabbatai Zevi really was

the Messiah, received the laconic reply: "*Huh, velo acher*—he and no other." Letters such as this passed from hand to hand in the Exchange. One merchant, a man named Anatia, who was present, tried to pour cold water on their excitement, referring to the Talmud as proof that it was impossible for the Messiah to appear at this juncture, since the prerequisites for his advent had not been fulfilled. But the others met his arguments with stern disapproval. On their return home for the midday meal they learned that Anatia had had a stroke at table. This produced a deep impression because they all felt they knew the reason for it. Henceforward there were not many open opponents to the idea.

The news and those who circulated it were not always reliable; very often the wish was father to the thought. But feeling ran so high that this made no difference. A letter from the Rabbis of Jerusalem in which they expressed their belief that the Temple would soon be restored was quite enough to convince the people that it would be. And this led to untold rejoicing. There were grand illuminations and the synagogue and every corner of the houses were bright with lights.

Thus in their way they took events perfectly seriously and were prepared for the great day. Special feast days were held, celebrated by illuminations and the singing of psalms, and many who were not Jews attended the synagogues. The printing presses were kept busy day and night preparing a small volume in Hebrew, Spanish, and Portuguese, giving all the rules for the preparation of the soul for the Messianic Age. It contained descriptions of penitential exercises, prayers, and formulae of address.

Another little book also appeared describing the ceremonies and solemnities with which the Messiah should be received and crowned. There were also changes in the order of prayer. Whereas the great priestly blessing had hitherto been uttered only on important feast days, it was now pronounced every Sabbath, for the time of fulfilment was at hand. And in Amsterdam as elsewhere some of the Jews were beginning to sell their houses. Clever, enlightened, and thoughtful people acted in this way and their conduct seemed all the more justified owing to the fact that the most distinguished members of the community, and scholars like Abraham Pereyra, Isaac Naar, Benjamin Musafia, de Castro, and others, joined the movement. Thus the city of "scholars and poets" re-echoed far and wide to the call of one man and one idea.

The presence of Marranos in Hamburg led to a similar response in the sister-community there. The two were constantly exchanging news, and their joy over events was further accentuated by the fact that they turned them to account to make open demonstrations against the vexatious practices of their environment. The followers of Sabbatai, the Sefardim, were in the majority in Hamburg also. But the younger Ashkenazian community, consisting of Polish and German Jews, was independent of them, and their temperament and past history made them less boisterous in their enthusiasm. But this did not in any way enable them to abate the general rejoicing. The memoirs of the Glückel family of Hameln give a picture of the state of affairs. "It is impossible to describe the rejoicings that occurred when letters were received from Turkey. The Sefardim received most of the correspondence and

immediately rushed with it to the synagogue, where the news was read aloud. Germans both young and old also congregated there. The young Portuguese always put on their best clothes and wore broad green ribbons—Sabbatai Zevi's colours. And thus they all went 'dancing and beating the drum' to their synagogues, and with the joy 'felt by the Israelites when Moses struck the rock for water,' they read the letters aloud. Many of them sold their homes and houses and all they possessed and were expecting salvation every day. My stepfather of blessed memory, who lived in Hameln, left the place, together with his house, his farm, and all his goods and chattels, and went to Hildesheim." The Glückels' stepfather was a cautious man. He sent to his children in Hamburg a number of boxes packed with linen and dried foodstuffs, as he took it for granted that they would all travel direct to Palestine from there. Many months afterwards when all was over, the boxes were at last unpacked to prevent their contents from rotting.

In Hamburg everybody had been already for some time eagerly following Sabbatai's career. They had always been in doubt as to which of the expected Messiahs he would declare himself to be, the final Messiah of the House of David, or the latter's forerunner who was to prepare the way and then perish, and would come of the House of Benjamin. But Sabbatai's own proclamation in Ismir in December 1665 dispelled all doubt. He declared himself to be the final Messiah of the House of David. This news was received with great satisfaction and rejoicing, and men of high standing decided to join the movement, among them Manuel Texeira, the representative and

banker of Queen Christina of Sweden, as well as Benedict de Castro, her private physician, an extremely distinguished and able man. Sasportas alone, the unflinching opponent of the movement, held aloof, and with impotent rage declared that he was the only sober mind in a world of drunkards. "And when I saw all these things happening," he complained bitterly, "although the farce was worthy of laughter, I shed silent tears full of anguish over the credulity of these people from whose spirit all memory of our true prophets and traditions had vanished."

His complaint of the credulity of these people may be justified, but it does not go to the heart of the matter. For what determined their attitude was that the news which was constantly arriving provided ever fresh sustenance for expectations nursed and kept alive for generations with passionate devotion. To people in such a state of mind, the control of reason makes but an empty appeal. True, in addition to authentic reports, false, fantastic, and exaggerated news also came in, but the fact that it was circulated far and wide proves that there was a demand even for these miraculous accounts and legends. They appeared in ever fresh variations and, as a matter of fact, emanated chiefly from non-Jewish sources. Fresh miracles performed by Sabbatai were described. He had predicted that certain people would die and they had immediately done so! He had lighted a fire in a public place and walked through the flames several times without being injured! One night when he went out as usual to bathe, he met the Turkish watch who tried to arrest him. Their leader was on the point of striking him with his halberd, but suddenly he grew stiff and his right arm was paralysed! In

Jerusalem, which but yesterday had been full of Sabbatai's opponents, wonderful miracles were happening. The Temple was slowly beginning to rise from its ruins. Already the walls were standing. Rooms which hitherto had lain in ruins were beginning to be visible. Vexed by this the Turkish Governor had sent soldiers to pull down these portions of Solomon's structure, but as soon as they reached the walls they were struck down by an invisible hand. A second contingent met a similar fate. Overcome with rage, the Governor armed himself with a hammer, but just as he was about to strike the walls his arm was suddenly paralysed. A Rabbi took pity on him and cured him by prayer.

News of the ten lost tribes also appeared in various forms. A report came via Jerusalem to the effect that "in Persia, in the neighbourhood of Susa, nearly 8000 separate groups, and in Barbary and in the wilderness of Tafilet over 100,000 Jews were ready to follow Sabbatai as their king and prophet." Other reports declared that a man named Jeroboam had stirred up the Jews to rebellion, "in the great city of Aden and in Arabia Felix, in the kingdom of Elal." Their forces had already seized the cities of Sidon and Mecca, stormed Mohammed's grave and put 30,000 Turks to the sword. One of the chroniclers remarks that if Mecca had been destroyed the least the Turks would have felt bound to do by way of retaliation would have been to impose heavy fines on the Jews, or more probably to wipe them out root and branch. And as nothing of the sort had been reported, there was no proof that the city had been destroyed.

But at that time the whole East was alive with miracles.

Scholars and holy men who had been dead for centuries had begun to speak from their graves. The prophet Zechariah had risen from the dead to add his word of forgiveness for the sins of Israel, and apparently a mysterious light was to be seen constantly shining over Jerusalem.

The Jews responded in every possible way to the news of their forthcoming redemption except that of poetical expression. They sang, they danced, they rejoiced, but they did not write poetry. The events that were taking place were perhaps in themselves a page of poetry. In any case, they came so thick and fast that there was no time for the maturing of poetical works. And when the people had time to reflect and once again form a mental image of their past, their mouths were closed with shame. But for litanies, which are of the nature of prayers, only one pitiful and primitively credulous song has come down to us. The author was one of those men who had seen the worst and who could therefore be quite light-hearted and full of joyous hope, a man from the East, named Jacob Taussk. He was not a real poet. Moreover, as the title tells us, his song has reached us not even at second, but at third hand: "A beautiful new song of the Messiah, who in the beginning was held to be the last Messiah in the East, Schabbasi Zebbi, by Jacob Taussk of Prague, set up in his honour and printed in the year 1666 in Amsterdam in Jewish type and now published, so that the blind stupidity of the Jews may be better known among Christians, from the Dutch Jewish copy, with the retention of all the dialect, reprinted in Breslau in the year 1670 of the true Messiah."

Taussk's poem is the clumsy work of an untutored man

of the people, whose heart is overflowing and who finds everyday language inadequate as a means of expression. He believed everything that reached him in the way of news and in retailing it wove into it stirring appeals to his brethren to abandon their old manner of life. For what purpose did trade and profits and the accumulation of money serve now?

"Tarry not, my brethren," he sang, "nor think of hoarding gold. When we enter the Holy Land we shall be born again. For God Almighty will give unto us what he hath promised."

And he tried to inspire courage in his brothers. "Do not be afraid, dear brethren, the Turks will be our servants. They will rinse the glasses in which we shall drink the health of the Messiah. We shall work no more. We shall only read the Thora; God will protect us and we need no longer fear."

Whereupon this recluse, this bookworm, this scholar and mystic suddenly begins to apostrophize the sun, moon and stars, and to get into touch once more with Nature.

"Now shine, O Sun, and show thy face, and pour down thy rays on us right diligently. For Joshua, too, didst thou obey, when he vanquished thirty-one *Mlochim* (kings). And do thou, O Moon, also come forth and light up the heavens with the stars. When our fathers fled out of Egypt right gladly didst thou give them of thy light. Thou art all compassion and mercy and fillest our hearts with great joy."

Although verses such as these do not say much for the quality of the poetical productions of the period, they do reveal its mental attitude. Those who could think and

feel in this way were deaf to argument; nothing their opponents could say reached their ears. As a matter of fact, very few rejected Sabbatai, though here and there a few opponents were to be found among the orthodox in the strictest sense of the word. They did not for a moment doubt Sabbatai's existence or the fact that the Messianic era would be inaugurated in their own day. But they were so hidebound by law and tradition that they could not bear to see any change, and were well aware that as soon as the Messianic era dawned rules and regulations would be abolished. And now that the time had come, they shrank back in fear. To secure their own safety until the day of redemption, they had hedged themselves in with so many safeguards that they would not have survived the loss of them, even if the salvation of the Jews had been realized. Thus it was not their piety or instinct that saved them, but merely their conservatism, though at that juncture it provided them with no effective weapon against the Sabbataians. They were so ruthlessly attacked, persecuted and reviled that they were obliged to seek refuge in silence. Those who had other reasons for opposition were also forced to hold their tongues, since reason and scepticism are no match for credulity and enthusiasm. But meanwhile they took steps to secure themselves against the inevitable catastrophe by secretly hoarding money and concealing their goods, which if they had believed in the forthcoming return to Jerusalem they ought to have sold.

There was only one man at this time who regarded it as his duty actively to oppose Sabbatai Zevi, to fight him by every means in his power and constantly to warn the

Jews against the movement. This was Jacob Sasportas. He was born in Oran in 1610 and had already begun officiating as a Rabbi in his native place when he was twenty-four years of age. He was at one time imprisoned on a false charge, but managed to escape and fled to Amsterdam. Here he made the acquaintance of Manasseh ben Israel, whom he accompanied to London to support him in his negotiations for the re-admission of the Jews into England. He remained in this new unofficial home, acting as Rabbi, until in 1665 the plague drove him from London, and he went to Hamburg. It was here that he received the first news of events in Ismir. He immediately protested against the whole business, against Sabbatai, Messianism, Sabbatai's followers, believers in miracles, the prophet Nathan, Primo, Sarah, and every statement and incident that emanated from that quarter. He was a benevolent kindly man, by no means combative by nature. He acknowledged the purpose of the Kabala, if only because at that time it provided the sole means of gratifying religio-mystic needs. But, on the other hand, he was not only a distinguished Talmudist but also a trained rationalist, and possessed two qualities which above all were bound to make him hostile to the Sabbataian movement. He had grown up in the East and was familiar with Orientals and their way of reacting to words and incidents; he knew how their imaginations exaggerated everything that happened and that the greatest caution was necessary in believing a word they said. He was also a good judge of men and in Sabbatai's case a sound instinct was strengthened by a growing hostility to the man who had on his own initiative proclaimed himself the Messiah in

Ismir. He approached everything he did in a sceptical spirit; for it was perfectly justifiable to be doubly critical towards any man who put forward such extraordinary claims. Thus there was very little capable of surviving his searching scrutiny, and the final result of his investigations led him to regard the movement as a colossal spiritual and political danger for the whole of Judaism. This imposed a great responsibility upon him and he began to write letters to the Rabbis all over the world imploring them, as leaders of their communities, to resist the movement in their own circles.

For the time being it was labour in vain. He received evasive replies. Some categorically declared that they believed in Sabbatai and his movement. Others abused him for his scepticism and he was even bombarded by threats. In the end he was surrounded by enemies and was despised and isolated. It was useless for him to protest any longer. Nobody listened, much less troubled to answer. Thus he impotently held his peace, and watched developments, eagerly and conscientiously collecting all the evidence he could about Sabbatai Zevi and his followers, and in the year 1673 he completed in Hamburg his great work, *Anti-Sabbataiana*, a conception of a tragedy in which call and answer failed to correspond.

Inasmuch as in this book Sasportas does not confine himself to a mere statement of fact, but discusses religion and mysticism, the doctrine of faith and Sabbatai's system, he rendered an important service to the history of religion, although at the time it could effect nothing. This is not the place to discuss whether Sabbatai created a religious system of his own or whether it was the most intellectual

of his followers who put the words into his mouth and attributed to him thoughts and conclusions which were really their own. The great mass of the people were not qualified to understand the theoretical side of the movement, nor had they any wish to do so. They may possibly have suspected that the Kabbalistic world was standing at the cross-roads and that the passionate logic of a man like Abraham Cardozo was about to administer its death-blow, but they were very far from seeing it as a fact. They could not understand the religious controversy; all they were capable of grasping at the moment was the idea of salvation which had always permeated their faith. They had never forgotten Hosea's prophecy of the "day of Jezreel," which meant not the city where Jehu had been guilty of bloodshed, but the term signifying God winnows, or God disperses. From the earliest days of their religious existence, they had been promised a radiant future, a future which was bound to come if only they remained true to their God and the faith of their fathers. But their lack of faith had interfered with the natural course of events, and they were now awaiting a gift of grace for which they could hope but which they could not claim. Whether what Sabbatai was offering them constituted this gift of grace could only be accepted or denied whole-heartedly. It was impossible to argue about it. They therefore felt abysmal hatred and contempt for those who at that moment instead of believing entered into disputations on the subject.

A little incident, which despite the seriousness of the parties concerned is rather amusing, illustrates this attitude of mind. Thomas Coenen, the Protestant pastor in Ismir, anxious to be clear about matters and to be in a

position to explain them, went one day, when Sabbatai was already in Constantinople, to visit his youngest brother. After conversing for a little while they entered into a theological discussion, and Zevi, having listened in silence to Coenen's arguments, replied that religion was not exactly his province but that he understood all about textiles. The pastor was obliged to drop theology and ask Zevi about the Messiah. To his annoyance the brother confined himself to eulogizing the Messiah. Whereupon Coenen advanced cogent arguments to prove that Sabbatai could not be the Messiah. "If God has chosen my brother," replied Zevi, "He will soon manifest Himself through him." And there was nothing more to be said!

We must now refer to another form of contemporary opposition, that of the non-Jewish chroniclers and particularly the theologians of whom there were many. They eagerly seized on all this strange material and worked it up, although as regards the actual facts they were wont as a rule unscrupulously to copy whole pages almost word for word from each other. They frequently distorted and falsified passages, giving them a turn and a twist calculated to excite the mocking laughter of the reader. Although we may not approve of it, such conduct was at least comprehensible, for these writers were not concerned with being serious historians; all they cared about were the religious questions which lay behind the tale. And these were presented in an extraordinarily spiteful and contemptuous spirit. A few quotations will make this clear. "That which was written over a thousand years ago of the Jews (Augustine, *Tractate 113, In Johannem*), 'They neglect the heavenly and yearn after the earthly,' is and

remains true to this day of the modern earth-bound Israelite. . . . The Christian mind believes that Jesus Christ was made flesh, wherefore the Christian is the spirit of God. The modern Jewish mind, on the contrary, does not believe that Jesus (as Christ or Messiah) was made flesh, wherefore the Jew is not the spirit of God." "There are many Christians today who deliberately invent fairy tales about the new Jewish Messiah, who write them down and have them printed as genuine Messianic and prophetic truths, and read and explain them to the Jews, who are already sufficiently dazzled by their longing for a Messiah." Another asks, "Why do people not accept the miracles of our true Messiah? That not a few adherents of the Jews are said to have been won over in the first burst of enthusiasm, we do not deny. . . . The worst of it is they are fiends incarnate. But apart from this, they would rather, in spite of everything, be wretched Jews than noble Christians, the reason being that their heads are too full of their ancient history and the everlasting Covenant."

All this points to the fact that the theoretical acceptance by Gentiles of the Jewish idea of Redemption had to a large extent died out by the time matters began to look serious. Forgetting the Jewish problem, the Christians suddenly discovered one of their own in the discomfiting fact that all their attempts at converting the Jews had failed. The idea so incomprehensible to the Jewish mind, that a man can be converted to another faith by argument or violence had led to fiasco, and the various glaringly conflicting views as to what constitutes faith were once more brought to the fore. Meanwhile the opponents of the

Jews became unconsciously guilty of that blind injustice which makes an understanding or settlement impossible from the beginning—they regarded miracles differently according to whether they happened to themselves or to their adversaries. In the one case they were genuine, in the other they were frauds. Thus the lack of respect shown by one side for the religious experiences of the other inevitably added a further factor to the many causes for strife and opposition already in existence.

At the time, the Jews overlooked this attitude. They had no need to trouble their minds about the hostility around them. Their eyes and ears, their hearts and minds were in Constantinople, where their Messiah was going to decide the fate of the world.

CHAPTER X

Migdal Os

IN February 1666, when the winter storms were lashing the sea to fury, the little sailing vessels of the eastern Mediterranean were struggling painfully northward along the coast from Ismir, making their way towards the Bosphorus. They were diminutive, insignificant merchant craft; the great trade route taken by the vessels with heavier and more valuable cargoes held a different course.

But among these small sailing vessels there was one which would have heaved in every plank, if those spiritual forces urging it forward and those opposing its progress could have materialized. It was the ship bearing the Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi.

He was squatting on deck, protected from the storm by a canvas awning, and it is significant that he looked neither ahead nor to the rear. He would certainly have cast his eyes behind had he felt that in his rear there was a united body of people, terrifying in their numbers and their faith, a living wall, who at every moment and at every heart-beat, were sending out energy towards him and on his behalf. But he doubted the existence of such a body. True, he had countless followers, but his adversaries had command of the dangerous weapons of intellect and perseverance. As time had gone on and Sab-

batai had performed various petty spasmodic actions and made various boastful assertions, the people had been impelled to decide either for or against him. But they could not tolerate any alteration in their traditions. From time immemorial they had lived with the traditional treasure of their faith. Nay more, they had actually discovered in the four corners of the earth a superhuman way of dying for it. And suffering binds men, makes them reverent and humble. Blood flowing from countless wounds or painfully surging up in the breast forges imperishable links with the past, for at any moment a man may be struck down and robbed of tomorrow, of the future. Faced with the alternative of choosing the sad commemoration of yesterday or the delights of a day of rejoicing tomorrow, they chose the sad commemoration as being more certain, more concrete, more familiar. They mistrusted joy and the morrow, for they had never been able to lay firm hold on either. For such a permanent possession to be theirs, it was necessary for some promise to be fulfilled, some manifestation to take place, which would make a final and unmistakable end of their painful existence.

But nothing of the kind had happened. True, Sabbatai had drawn a pen through their laws and abolished their commemoration days, those days of fruitful mourning, and had told them to rejoice. But joy cannot be produced to order and the voice behind the command was not impelling. It had not the ring of the absolute, the inevitable. So Sabbatai still had enemies.

Others, on the contrary, were more concerned about concrete and everyday realities. For generations they had known that they were living on a volcano, and some of

them had contrived to flourish in spite of it. But even the latter never forgot that it was imprudent to dig the spade of will too deep into the treacherous soil about them, and let loose the molten lava over their own homes. They lived in a country, surrounded by a religion, and under a rule, which their faith inevitably made them regard as hostile. What mattered it that for centuries they had been allowed breathing-space? They lived under a foreign power. God had delivered them into the hand of their enemies, and as long as this was the case, it was foolhardy and mad to provoke them. But that was what they were doing. A man had set out from their midst, not attempting to conceal the object of his journey, which was to depose the Sultan, the ruler of the land in which they lived. A divine mission and the fulfilment of a divine call were all very well, but meanwhile the scheme on foot was high treason! It was possible that the man who had undertaken it would succeed. And who would fail to rejoice if the object for which they had prayed all their lives with profoundest faith came to be attained, for they had not yet learnt to pray with their lips alone. It was quite possible, therefore, that this man might succeed in founding the new kingdom. But it was more probable that the attempt would fail. While some doubted the force and irresistible might of the divine voice, others were dubious whether any worldly weapons could overthrow the power of the Sultan and put an end to his existence. And if the undertaking failed, it would mean disaster for all the Jews living in the Turkish Empire. There was an old law, incorporating the typical resistance of a strong power to a weak group within it, which ran as follows: "The deed of the

individual becomes the crime of all if it be regarded as evil. But the deed of the individual, if it be good, is held to the credit of the individual alone." If Sabbatai's attempt failed, all the Jews of the land would immediately become traitors, and a new chain of affliction would be forged for them. That was why he had enemies.

Sabbatai was well aware of this and so could not look back with a feeling of confidence to the mass of his followers. But neither did it help him to look ahead towards his goal, and fire his imagination by the decisive action with which he was faced. For here, too, everything was vague and shrouded in uncertainty. He had not the faintest notion what he would do in Constantinople. For all he had said and done had merely led up to the journey he was taking, and had petered out in this final effort. He was travelling towards his goal. He was approaching the place where his destiny was to be fulfilled, but it was impossible for him to know or to guess what was going to happen there or what he would do. He was in mid-ocean, sailing before the wind. Something must surely happen to show him the way, to whisper the words in his ear, and place the weapon in his hand.

What does a man do who is thrown upon his own resources amid February tempests in a small sailing vessel with no visible means of escape and no goal whether he looks back to yesterday or forward to tomorrow, whether he turns his eyes backwards or forwards? He will try to discover that mysterious intermediate plane, the realm of dreams, where nothing is real, and anything and everything may happen, where fairy tale, legend, and poetic fancy have set up their fantastic sway, and from whence

they will one day force their entry into life with all the power of reality.

So he sat and dreamed on this journey, and when time and again he had to seek shelter at night from the raging storm in some little seaport town, he reached solid earth, it is true, but not solid reality. The wind remained steadily against him, as if it were trying to keep him from his goal. This was a bad omen, and his companions, four scholars belonging to his most intimate circle, were inclined to dissuade him from continuing the journey. But in the little ports in which he took refuge, he heard things which made it impossible for him to turn back. Legends had travelled far ahead of him. It was reported, for instance, that Sabbatai had not set sail with four scholars, but with an escort of four hundred prophets. The vessel was said to have no crew and no captain but had hoisted sail and set forth on its voyage alone and a cloud or a pillar of fire had come down from heaven and completely enveloped it. Presently a storm had blown up which threatened to wreck it, but Sabbatai had risen up and put his foot against the mast and in the twinkling of an eye the ship had reached Constantinople.

Sabbatai was comforted to think that people believed all this, for relying on a power which had never yet forsaken him, he had foretold the precise day on which he would reach Constantinople. Either people would never know, or else they would soon forget that the wind had upset all his arbitrary calculations. The faith and credulity of his friends had soon found a reason for the fact that his little nutshell was forced again and again to seek refuge in port; in order to delay the ship's progress, the

Messiah, they argued, had commanded it to enter ports along its route, as he did not wish to reach Constantinople before the twenty-first of January.

His various visits ashore convinced Sabbatai that it was impossible to turn back. Apparently on hearing the news that the Messiah was going to Constantinople, many Jews had left their homes of their own accord, and were already on their way to the capital from every part of the world to witness the great things which were to take place there. This news greatly encouraged him. Thus in this city, which might be full of danger for him, he would not be utterly friendless and forsaken. Moreover, he had taken certain precautions, and had sent a faithful follower, Rabbi Bune, ahead to Constantinople to make the necessary arrangements for his arrival and reception.

He continued on his way, still dreaming.

On this dreamland plane there were many strange and comforting resting-places. Not only did rumours and legends emanate from Sabbatai's own circle, but they also came to him from outside. Just at this juncture a strange story, brought by seamen from the Netherlands, reached his ears. They declared that a ship was said to have been sighted north of Scotland with silk sails and rigging; it was manned by a crew who all spoke Hebrew and a huge flag floated on the foremast bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Such miracles and apparitions, and realities of this description, which no believer could doubt, fitted in well with dreaming, and helped to shorten the long and trying journey. Moreover, they helped to create little reserves

of energy, with which to face the clash with actuality which was bound to come.

Sabbatai's opponents had seen to it that this clash should occur immediately on his arrival. Having weighed the pros and cons, and considered what was possible and probable, they had come to the conclusion that while hope was out of the question, there was every reason to fear danger, and it was imperative to ward this off from the community and also to protect themselves in good time from any suspicion of being implicated in the proposed act of treason. Consequently, before the ship had reached the Dardanelles, the representatives of the Jewish community in Constantinople presented themselves before the Grand Vizier, Achmed Köprili, and made the following statement: "There will shortly arrive from Ismir a certain vessel, upon which will be a man who declares himself to be the Messiah of the Jewish people. His intention is to take the crown from the head of the Sultan and set it upon his own. We do not believe he is the Messiah. We think he is either a poor deluded creature or a charlatan." Having discharged this duty they took their leave, possibly comforting themselves with the secret reflection that, if after all he was the Messiah, God would not fail to help him. If thou be the Son of God, save thyself!

But they need not have troubled to make this declaration; for only a few weeks previously Köprili had received a report from the Kadi of Ismir, in which the latter had asked for instructions as to the attitude he should adopt towards the leader of the new religious movement. De la Croix, the French Ambassador to the Porte, an extremely

enlightened man, declared that Köprili was far from being a bloodthirsty man, but he had the reputation of being a great statesman, who had taken thoroughly to heart the lesson of recent events and had ruthlessly removed from the Porte any one against whom he had the smallest suspicions. But he was impartial and incorruptible in the administration of justice.

On the receipt of the Kadi's report he had sent orders for Sabbatai to be imprisoned. It was a harmless measure, but would do much to secure the peace. But before the measure could be carried out he heard that the new Messiah was already on his way to fulfil his threat. And the Jews confirmed the report. He therefore felt that more energetic steps must be taken against the menace. Whoever Sabbatai Zevi might be, the intention he had expressed stamped him as a man conspiring to commit high treason. Therefore he must be put out of the way before he could foment disturbances. Köprili, who in addition to his other functions, filled the office of Chief Justice of the Empire with full power of life and death, sentenced Sabbatai to be impaled before he reached Constantinople, and left it to a *Kaimakam* to make the necessary arrangements. And thus death, which had threatened Sabbatai in so many different forms, now lay waiting for him once more, though he knew nothing of it. He sailed on and dreamed. The ship had now been about forty days on its journey, an exceptionally long time even for that season of the year. But as soon as it was in sight of land, the Kaimakam's spies were already on their way, to seize its passengers as they landed. Sabbatai probably knew what he had to expect, and might try to land at some deserted spot along

the Dardanelles coast, with the object of suddenly making his appearance in Constantinople. But to prevent disturbances in the city he must be forestalled. And the spies accordingly kept a sharp look-out all along the coast.

At last they espied a ship fighting its way through the storm and hugging the coast with the minimum of sail. A few people staggered down the gangway to the beach. They were obviously Jews. The officer of the watch asked them their names, their port of embarkation and their destination. He heard one of them reply: "Sabbatai Zevi—Ismir—Constantinople." He nodded, and without offering either violence or explanation, a band of armed men quietly closed round the little group.

Making no attempt to resist, Sabbatai and his friends mounted the horses offered to them, and rode until night-fall, when they reached Chekmese Rutshuk, a place near Constantinople. There they rested for the night and the whole of the next day, for it was the Sabbath, and the Kaimakam respected their wish not to desecrate it by travelling.

Meanwhile, however, somebody had heard of their arrival, and either he or his news travelled faster than the horses of the prisoners. By Friday evening some of Sabbatai's followers had already reached the spot, arriving on foot, or else in carriages or on horseback. They spent the whole night on the pavement outside the building in which the Messiah was confined, so that they might see him as early as possible on the morrow. When they were at last admitted to his presence, they broke into loud lamentations at his fate, asking bitterly how he could save them when he himself was in chains. But Sabbatai rose

superior to it all; he was perfectly calm and pointed out that they could not hope to see him free unless they had first seen him in chains. Even Joseph had been taken as a prisoner to Egypt, but had risen to power in the end. It was all a divine secret which they did not understand.

Possibly the faithful were comforted by this. At all events they did everything they could at the moment to alleviate his lot and to make it worthy of him. They slipped money into the Kaimakam's palm, and in return he took off the prisoners' chains. They then constructed a raised seat like a throne for the Messiah, and setting the Rabbis beside him, celebrated the Sabbath with him in a mood of mingled depression and excitement.

Meanwhile the whole of Constantinople rang with the news. The Jewish Messiah was coming! The Turks did not appreciate the full significance of this, though they felt that something strange, menacing, and provocative lay behind it, against which they must be on their guard. Almost before they knew what they were doing, they were already on the road in groups and parties, setting out to meet this strange Messiah and to dispose of him. But the authorities wished to avoid all disturbances and scandal. The prisoners and their escort were accordingly sent along by-ways and, after hiding in a customs house near the coast during the day, they reached Constantinople secretly by night under cover of a fog. The Messiah was taken to the debtors' jail and placed in custody there. He had made his entry into the capital, but somewhat differently from the way he had pictured in his imagination! Once again in his life events took charge of him, as it were, and led him along.

Although neither he nor his companions had been able to exchange many words with his followers, and although the time that had elapsed between his landing and his confinement in custody had been as short as possible and there had been no fuss or disturbances, the whole city knew on the very same day that the Messiah had arrived and that he was in prison.

A half stifled sigh escaped from the lips of the faithful and their opponents. In the streets the former looked sad, the latter scoffed. "*Gheldi mi?*—Is he coming?" cried the Mohammedans scornfully, and drove off the Jews with a hail of stones. But the latter returned, and crowded round the prison walls. They were waiting for something to happen, or to get even a glimpse of the man who, whether a charlatan or not, was agitating the world—their world. But they waited in vain. The authorities did not yet know what was happening or what course to adopt, for Sabbatai had not been examined. He was not examined until two days later, and the proceeding led to a scene of which the people knew nothing as long as Sabbatai was alive. Köprili sent one of his lieutenants to the prison. He could not go himself, as his presence in person would have lent the matter far too great importance, and his lieutenant was well informed. Even if he had not had everything explained to him by the Grand Vizier, he would have been bound to know what had become a common topic of conversation all over the country—that the Jews were expecting a Messiah.

Even a follower of Mohammed could not remain entirely unmoved by such news; for all faith is founded on the hope that in the far distant future all earthly troubles

will be ended by the advent of a Messiah at whose coming the eternal chain of birth, death and recurrence will be broken and all be peace. From time to time all the world over the cry had been raised that the Messiah was at hand, and who could say whence it came, or how the wind blew the seed of corn on to the little patch of earth in the rock?

Thus the question was put to Sabbatai Zevi: "Who art thou? Art thou the Messiah of the Jews?" And the ground seemed to be shaken by the subterranean rumblings of the question which hundreds of years before the Governor of Judea had asked. But the latter had put the query with boredom and indifference, his mind full of fear the while lest the accused and those who had brought the charge against him might get him into trouble with a certain gouty and suspicious old man in Capri, who would hold him responsible for any disturbance. Whereas in Constantinople the question was asked more irresponsibly, perhaps, but with greater interest and suspense.

Different though the replies were in each case, they have this in common, that neither bore the stamp of a really frank avowal. A man might in his own heart, and before his God, silently repeat again and again that he was the Messiah, and this affirmation would confirm him in his belief in his call. But confronted by an inquiry on the part of an outsider, or by the hostile curiosity and interest of those who put the question, not because they wished to believe, but to test and judge the claimant, the sense of irrevocability rises up like a great wall. The Messiah of Galilee got out of the difficulty by means of an ambiguous phrase, which gave some sort of reply but left

the decision in the hands of fate. "Thou sayest it." The Messiah of Ismir reached out with both hands for an anchor by which to secure himself and lied. "I am a scholar sent from Jerusalem to collect alms for the poor of Palestine," he said.

He lied! He was not a fighter by nature. Just as he had left the scene without defending himself when the Rabbis of Ismir had pronounced their ban, and when the Rabbis of Salonica had hurled their threats against him, so now he retreated before a power which was trying to lay violent hands on him and might prove dangerous. But, after all, he knew his opponents and had to reckon with the possibility of being attacked. He had had time enough to decide what his attitude would be and to think out blow and counter-blow. But just as reality had always failed to offer him the fulfilment he expected, so he always failed when confronted by reality. His belief in himself and his mission was renewed only when some outside force lent him confidence and support. If he met with opposition and power was not clearly on his side, he gave way.

Thus he again had recourse to the petty human expedient of falsehood. The Pasha's lieutenant, also remaining on a petty human plane, retorted by giving Sabbatai a mighty slap in the face. It was meant for Sabbatai, not the Messiah. It was the automatic reflex action of a man giving expression to his feelings of relief after a moment of fear and repression. But after it he had a tender spot in his heart for Sabbatai, whom he had no further cause to fear; for, after all, he was not the Messiah, but with rare presence of mind had merely obeyed a strange com-

mand, frequently preached but rarely carried out, and had of his own accord humbly turned the other cheek to his adversary. And the Pasha's lieutenant was touched. Discussing the matter later on, he declared that the Jews had obviously proclaimed Sabbatai Messiah against his will, and that the blow he had struck him was really meant for the Jews who had forced him into that position.

After this brief examination, no further steps were taken. There was no need for them. For when a man openly acknowledged his real calling there could be no cause for further anxiety. Nevertheless, as an individual capable of provoking disorder and excitement among the masses it was thought advisable to keep him in prison to prevent him from exercising his activities in this way and promoting a Messiah movement though there was no Messiah. This provided further reason for not treating him with the severity usually meted out to malefactors in custody, for he was merely the instrument of crime and not himself a criminal.

But another outside factor was at work—a document was passed from hand to hand which carried all the weight an official political manifesto would in the present day. A cool-headed diplomat, the "Bailo" Giambattista Balarino, Grand Chancellor of the Venetian Embassy at the Porte, had sent it from Pera to his Government on March 18, 1666, six weeks after the Messiah had been cast into prison. The report was perfectly sober, yet the mass of improbabilities it contained reflected the glamour which still radiated from the fitfully iridescent figure of the Messiah. The Ambassador felt this and therefore forestalled any objection the reader might advance against

the fantastic nature of his tale. *"Chiudo quest' umilissima lettera con racconto forse nell' apparenza vano e soverchio, da me perciò pretermesso nei passati dispacci, ma altrettanto essenziale nel riflesso a vantaggi che van ricavando questi Barbari da qualunque nuovo emergente."*

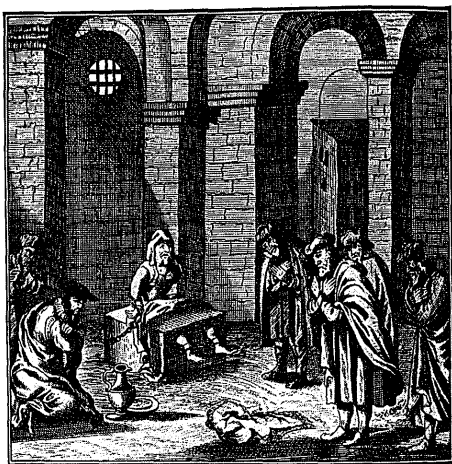
He then proceeded to describe the origin and aims of the movement and the confusion it caused among those who joined it. He also knew that even before Sabbatai's landing the fate of the Messiah had been decided and that he had been condemned to death. And now everybody was wondering why the sentence had not been carried out. For it was pointed out—and in view of Köprili's policy for securing the safety of the state the argument appears cogent enough—that those who were a danger and a menace to the Porte, or were even suspected of being so, were given short shrift. They were quietly put out of the way and all anxiety was at an end. Why then did nothing happen to Sabbatai?

And indeed nothing happened, except that Sabbatai Zevi asked for an audience of Achmed Köprili and his request was granted. He played all the trump cards he held—his appearance, his voice, his astonishing mastery of the Arabic language, and the suggestive power of his personality, with the result that the Grand Vizier spared his life and did not pass judgment upon him, but confined himself to limiting his freedom of action, and furthermore treated him as a prisoner of distinction. Had Sabbatai implored Köprili to spare his life? Had he proved himself to be so harmless that it seemed unnecessary to carry out the death sentence? Or had he talked the Grand Vizier round and convinced him? A contemporary remarks:

"What Sevy said or did at the interview I shall not discuss, as it is too uncertain. . . ."

Ballarino suggested a plausible reason for this extraordinary turn of events. "The Turkish statesman," he declared, "winked his eye at the movement so as to be able to extort money from its supporters." And the Turks did indeed profit financially by it. But was there any movement or any helpless outlaw through whom the authorities would have refused to enrich themselves? As the subsequent course of events proved, at first a sense of security made them careless and afterwards fear made them uncertain what to do. Possibly, however, the solution of the whole problem is to be found in the impression made on the Grand Vizier by Sabbatai Zevi himself at their interview; for indiscreet rumours emphatically declared that Achmed Köprili had a soft place in his heart for handsome men.

Thus Sabbatai remained in prison in Constantinople and was treated with the utmost consideration. He was not put in chains, but was given a comfortable room which looked more like the apartment of a prisoner of state than a cell, and his friend and secretary Primo was accommodated in a room next door. He was allowed to say which of his more intimate friends he wished to have constantly with him. Except for lack of freedom he wanted for nothing. Indeed, in the peace that was forced upon him and the involuntary isolation of his lot he found the strength to prepare himself for a fresh and formidable advance and struggle with God. He spent his time in the severest self-mortification. Prayer alternated with fasting, and his fasts often lasted three days. With profound faith he



SABBATAI IN PRISON

*Receiving a Delegation from the Jewish
Community of Constantinople*



PENITENTIAL EXERCISES OF THE
SABBATAIANS IN SALONICA

once more staked everything on the hour of redemption, and was determined at all costs to bring it about. Again and again he succeeded in conjuring up the premonitory signs. Fiery apparitions constantly visited him and released him from the convulsions and ecstasies of his penitential exercises, while Primo was ever in attendance, quick to note any change in the Messiah's bearing or expression, which with all the power of his eloquence he would immediately report to the waiting crowds outside. Heaven was giving ever fresh miraculous signs that the time was ripe.

According to the instructions laid down in the practical branch of the Kabala, penitential exercises include the rite of ablution. Sabbatai therefore begged permission of the authorities to go down every day to the beach and perform this ritual before the eyes of his followers. His request was granted, and from that day a strange spectacle was to be seen. A little procession consisting of Sabbatai and his closest friends set out from the prison, but as it progressed through the streets its numbers steadily grew. The faithful cheered in his rear, the unbelievers cursed, while the natives poured mockery, scorn, and insults upon both. Every day the procession to the sea became an uproarious tumult. But quite unperturbed, Sabbatai remained immersed for long periods in the wintry sea, which was so cold that it took his breath away. He was quite human now and acted as he did for the sake of effect, because thousands were watching him, and because he was impelled by a fresh outburst of fanatical desire. But the scenes of disorder grew worse and worse, the passions of the mob were aroused by these processions to the sea, and

conflicts ensued. Differences of opinion were settled by blows, and Sabbatai's followers accordingly appealed to Achmed Köprili for a military escort to protect their daily procession.

The Grand Vizier was perfectly ready to grant this; although the price would be 60,000 reals. But what was money when feeling ran so high? Were there not immensely wealthy men at home, not to speak of those who lived abroad, who had sold all they possessed, because they could not take their belongings with them when they returned to the Holy Land? And nothing seemed more natural and gratifying than to hand over the money thus obtained to the man who was to lead them on this decisive journey.

The 60,000 reals were therefore immediately raised, and thenceforward the soldiers of the Sultan accompanied and protected the man who, thus fortified, was preparing to carry out the divine mission of deposing him and assuming the crown himself.

But the people were not satisfied for long with seeing their Messiah only in the streets and in the tumult of the procession. A further appeal was made to Achmed Köprili, and 40,000 reals purchased Sabbatai the right to receive anybody he liked as a visitor at any moment of the day, with the result that the faithful and the curious, both Jews and Moslems, immediately flocked to the prison to see the Messiah. Sabbatai turned no one away. And from the moment the people had access to him, eager to accept what he said, to believe what he promised and to acknowledge the importance and dignity he claimed for himself, he abandoned the pose of scholar and alms-gatherer from

Jerusalem and once more became the chosen of chosen, whose lofty aspirations impelled him to pronounce the Holy Name in full to make himself known. Although deprived of complete freedom of movement, his old confidence had been restored, for the simple reason that he saw no immediate threat of danger; and he was once more able to exert the impelling powers that secured him followers, to give utterance to vague mysterious interpretations and explanations, and to turn to account his ringing voice, the magnetism of his bearing and expression, and the irresistible flash of his bright, dark eyes. And what he was unable to do, the people gave him credit for having done; the working of miracles, for instance. Nobody had ever seen him perform miracles, but all swore that there was unimpeachable evidence of his having done so. Had they been trifling insignificant miracles, they might have given rise to doubt. But as they were great and wonderful and defied imagination, they must be genuine. It was impossible to call them in question without being in a position to refute them. And no one refuted them. Indeed, even the non-Jewish population credulously accepted them, and as they had no reason for revering a strange Messiah, more particularly as they were hoping for a Saviour of their own, their opinion on the matter was all the more valuable and worthy of acceptance. The wonders described and repeated from mouth to mouth were, as a rule, vague and intangible, but they all had an inner core that appealed to the imagination. The walls of the Temple were rising out of the earth, hundreds of thousands of members of the lost tribes had suddenly appeared from nowhere, pillars of fire had been seen, voices had

spoken from tombs, and babes and sucklings had lisped prophecies. Moreover, everything that had happened at the time of Sabbatai's imprisonment had long been relegated to the realm of the miraculous. Sabbatai had never been imprisoned. He had come to Constantinople and informed the Sultan through the Grand Vizier that he desired an audience of him. Instead of granting this, the Sultan had ordered the Vizier to have him arrested. An Aga with fifty janissaries had appeared to carry out the order, but on seeing the Messiah he had not dared to lay hands on him. So he had returned to the Grand Vizier, declaring that Sabbatai was not a mortal man, but an angel upon whose face he could not look. Even at the risk of his life he could not obey the order to arrest him. The Vizier had then sent another Aga with two hundred janissaries, but he had fared no better. Whereupon Sabbatai, having given proof of his power, had gone of his own accord to prison. The Jews exploited everything in these rumours calculated to create fear and consternation among their religious opponents. For they had already begun to look down somewhat contemptuously upon these outsiders who were about to receive salvation through them and their Messiah. And if anybody objected that he had not yet seen any of the miracles the Messiah was alleged to have performed, the invariable reply seemed conclusive: "Is it not in itself a miracle that Sabbatai should still be alive, and that the authorities have not unhesitatingly put him away? The Sultan is not usually so timid when it is a matter of getting rid of suspicious characters."

The only reply to this was that Sabbatai had evidently made no mention of his Messianic claims before the Sul-

tan. But against this objection stood the weight of facts. And now there could no longer be any doubt that, both in point of numbers and importance, the movement of which Sabbatai Zevi was the centre was assuming alarming proportions. Possibly, if he had again been questioned, he would still have replied, "I am an alms-gatherer." But this did not alter the fact that the movement around him was growing, that he did nothing to restrain it and everything to keep it alive. His conduct belied his explanation. If, however, he really was the Messiah, then Nathan Ghazati's prophecy, which he had never contradicted, that he was to take the crown from the Sultan's head and put it on his own, still held good.

If, therefore, the authorities let him alone, it meant that they did not dare to touch him. No one would venture to lay hands on a man who might prove to be the Messiah. The sight of the crowds who professed their faith in him, filled the authorities with doubt and uncertainty. Even the poorest of the poor, who had been forced to sell all they possessed to raise a few wretched coppers for their journey, had flocked to Constantinople to see the Messiah. Sabbatai graciously comforted them and prophesied that one day they would win great riches for having behaved as they had. Jews of repute also came to visit him in prison, and stood in his presence the whole day, with their heads bowed, their arms folded on their breasts, silent and motionless, in an attitude of pious immobility. And Sabbatai accepted it all. He allowed it to happen, and put up with it because it was thrust upon him. As had happened in Ismir, people in Constantinople were already beginning to be seized with fits and to murmur prophecies

about Sabbatai Zevi, and in this city which had once been hostile to him, everything was turning irresistibly in his favour. The people allowed the Messiah and his influence to enter into every detail of their daily lives. Many of them abandoned their callings and gave themselves up to penitential exercises. Trade began to suffer, and the English merchants who carried on business with the Jews were the first to be affected. They found it impossible to collect the money owing to them, for the Jews had closed their shops and nothing was being sold. In this difficulty they turned to the man who, they thought, had most influence and authority—the imprisoned Messiah. He recognized the justice of their complaints, and proved his power; for he immediately instructed Primo to draft a circular letter to be distributed throughout the city.

“Eternal Peace be unto you of the blood of Israel who are awaiting the reign of the Messiah and the salvation of Israel. I have learnt that ye still owe money to certain English merchants here, and it seemeth right in mine eyes to bid you pay these debts forthwith. If ye refuse and do not obey my command, I would have you know that ye will not share in our joy or enter into our Kingdom.”

No one disobeyed such an order, and the debts were paid.

The fact that a man, although he was in prison, could exercise such power gave the authorities unpleasant feelings. Perhaps, after all, it would be well to get rid of him. But perhaps it would be dangerous. It was impossible to tell what might happen. Köprili therefore resolved upon taking half measures, which betrayed both weakness and uncertainty. He had Sabbatai transferred to a fortress,

the Castle of Abydos in Gallipoli, where he hoped a stricter watch could be kept on him and the increasing crowds of visitors and followers be more easily held at bay.

In any case he could advance an obvious reason for the step. He was about to set forth on his Cretan campaign, and as he would be absent for some time, it was only reasonable to fear that the increasing unrest among the Jews might jeopardize the safety of the city.

There was another possible alternative which would perhaps have been conclusive and final, and might have solved the whole problem at one stroke. The Jews themselves had proposed it to Köprili. They had collected a further 100,000 reals and had offered them to the Grand Vizier to set Sabbatai free. Köprili was quite ready to do so. But Sabbatai would not consent. With a grand gesture, he refused the offer. He could not allow a farthing to be spent on his liberation! He knew and prophesied that marvellous miracles would occur before many days had elapsed for all to see. He prophesied, and the people believed him more firmly than ever. He was playing his highest trump and, thinking only of the momentary effect, did not stop to consider whether it was not the very last he would be able to produce in this game with the powers of the world. True, he won new followers, but he lost the last chance of his life, although at first everything seemed to confirm his position. He was taken to Abydos on the fourteenth of Nisan, the eve of the Passover, when the Jews commemorate their emancipation from Egypt.

But even the Grand Vizier was soon forced to acknowledge that at least as far as he himself and his own inter-

ests were concerned nothing had been gained by sending Sabbatai to Abydos; for his followers found their way even to Gallipoli. Indeed, they found it even more readily and in greater numbers, for having an obstacle to overcome. Although a Messiah might recoil again and again before the menacing appearance of facts, and make a fresh advance later, the credulous masses knew nothing of these ups and downs of energy. The direction of their endeavour, supported by a limitless fund of emotion, was plain enough. It was directed towards the goal, towards the ultimate experience of salvation. Obstacles did not weaken, they merely stimulated and fostered their spirit and energy. Thus even this obstacle was overcome with the greatest ease. If the enemy had again laid hands on the Messiah, it must, after all, be the will of God. But, rightly interpreted, even these humiliations had been sent only to make the ultimate triumph appear all the more glorious. Just as God had hardened Pharaoh's heart again and again in Egypt, in order to make the ultimate escape a supreme triumph of the divine will, thus what was today a prison and fortress would tomorrow be a citadel in which the Messiah would take up his abode and receive the homage of the whole world, and manifest his might. So the faithful no longer spoke of Abydos, but of Migdal Os, the Citadel of Power. And what faith and their fertile imaginations anticipated received startling confirmation from day to day. A stream of visitors began to flow to Abydos, such as Gallipoli had never seen before and never saw again. The isolated fortress became a pilgrims' shrine. The officer in command of it was at first somewhat harassed by this strange throng of curious folk, but soon

found a method of dealing with them. With the object of being quite impartial, he charged each visitor a small fee for being allowed to see Sabbatai. The charge per head varied from eight to ten thalers and was sometimes more. Thus he grew rich and had nothing to regret, while the inhabitants of Gallipoli were only too pleased to see the visitors, for they brought money to the place, trade became brisker, and there was an increased demand for labour. The Dardanelles became unusually busy, and the fares for a sea trip rose every day. It was prosperity!

For not only did poor and oppressed Jews come from Constantinople and other Turkish towns. A whole world had been set in motion, and was sending its representatives to Sabbatai Zevi. Travellers arrived every day from long distances, and ships came to port from Venice, Leghorn, Hamburg, and Amsterdam bearing messages and greetings of humble homage, as well as gifts worthy of the chosen of the people. Money poured into Gallipoli. Cargoes of tables, chairs, gilt arm-chairs, rare carpets, draperies, ornaments, and vessels were unloaded. The bare rooms of the fortress were fitted out with all the solemnity and luxury of royal apartments. The prisoner's warders became a guard of honour. All the rooms were used to accommodate Sabbatai Zevi, his friends and his suite. And the Turkish authorities did not dare to lift a finger in protest; for the whole proceeding was too wonderful, too magnificent, impressive, and unexpected. Overcome with astonishment and anxiety, they let matters take their course. The Jews were exultant and declared that the pit into which his enemies had tried to cast the Messiah had become a throne.

And thus, to the surprise of all, another royal residence

sprang up as it were in the night, beside the palace of the Sultan. It rested not on might, but on faith, and the next few weeks and months were to decide what the relationship between the two forms of power was to be.

CHAPTER XI

The Catastrophe

SABBATAI had begun to live as a prince in the Citadel of Power and was surrounded by everything that could help to suggest that he was a ruler in the old romantic sense. His subjects flocked to him to profess their loyalty and devotion, among them not only private individuals, but the official representatives of communities all over the world. These deputations, however, served a twofold purpose; for before they did homage and acknowledged their sovereign, they were instructed to sift the mass of conflicting evidence, and investigate the statements of opponents, who declared that Sabbatai was not the Messiah but merely an unusually skilful charlatan. There was hardly a country that had not sent its representative.

Strange to relate, not one of the deputations that came to Abydos left the place without having been profoundly impressed and deluded. And it should be remembered that they consisted chiefly of men familiar with all the subtleties of the Talmud and the Kabala, who, able to think for themselves, were not inclined to adopt an attitude of blind trust, but, in view of the multifarious disappointments their people had been forced to endure, were accustomed to scepticism. Thus it came about that not only the people with their simple education or lack of

education followed him, but that almost all the leading scholars of the day, and more particularly the Rabbis of Asia, Africa, Germany, Poland, Italy, and Holland, with but few exceptions, also put their faith in him. Their support constituted the most striking confession of the fact that the Messianic idea was ever present in their minds and that they were ready for it. Since faith in a Messiah and a Messianic Age was inextricably involved in the details of their everyday life, its realization was not such a miracle as might be supposed. And even if it appeared miraculous to them, it must be remembered that the miraculous was part of their cosmology and was merely a manifestation of the divine, with which they were reverently familiar. They felt none of the modern man's need to evade the idea of the miraculous by a wretched and fruitless rationalism, and to measure all miracles and reports of miracles by the paltry scale of logic and reason. That inexplicable residue which is always part of life, and through which life repeatedly expresses itself, was to them the experienced and undeniable fact of ultimate reality.

But, however ready they may have been to accept the idea of a Messiah, they would not have had sufficient grounds for maintaining and strengthening their faith if the man on whom it was centred had not given some suggestion of possessing exceptional powers. And Sabbatai had never done this more successfully or with greater effect than during the months of his imprisonment in Abydos. True, he lived in luxurious apartments, but they were in a fortress; true, he was constantly surrounded by people who did him homage, but they had to buy the right

to do so from his warders; true, he had the free bearing of a king, but he was bound by a foreign power to the spot where he lived. Those who had eyes to see could not conceal from themselves the fact that Sabbatai was a political prisoner, who, from motives of policy, was granted considerable freedom, but nevertheless was and remained a prisoner, carefully guarded by warders and soldiers, and in spite of all his dazzling surroundings, condemned to a life of impotence.

But with a grand gesture, Sabbatai Zevi waved all this aside. He did not admit it. He refused to admit it. And when, in the end, he did see it, he made it invisible to his followers. In the face of their searching scrutiny, which must often have been sharpened by secret suspicions, he thrust his person, his words, his edicts, his courtly bearing, and his faithful followers, until they became as blind and dazed as he was himself and noticed nothing but the enormous, lasting power of the movement. In this condition they overlooked the fact that its strength lay outside and not inside the fortress of Abydos; that it was represented by the crowd of his followers and not by Sabbatai Zevi himself; that they themselves had voluntarily made themselves fresh buttresses of the edifice, while on the roof stood one solitary figure ecstatically waving a flag.

Sabbatai Zevi continued to express his sense of his own importance in a series of fresh manifestoes. The ninth of Ab was approaching, the anniversary of the destruction of the second Temple. It was also Sabbatai's birthday. He accordingly sent messengers to Ismir to fetch Sarah, the

Queen. And shortly before this gloomy and trying day of mourning, one of Primo's edicts was sent out to the Jews of the world.

"The first-born Son of God, Sabbatai Zevi, the Messiah, the Redeemer of the Jews, sends to all the Children of Israel his message of Peace !

"Now that ye have been deemed worthy to see the great day of Redemption and the fulfilment of God's word, which He gave to our fathers through the mouths of the prophets, your tears and sorrows shall be turned to joy, O my children of Israel. Sing aloud and rejoice for that God hath comforted you, and hath turned the day ye once spent in tribulation and mourning into a day of jubilation, because I am come to you. Fear not, for ye shall win dominion over all peoples, not only them that are on the face of the earth, but also them that are hid in the depths of the sea."

On his own initiative Sabbatai added: "Hearken to me, eat your fill, rejoice and come unto me. Hearken to me and have no care for your souls, for I will forge the everlasting bond 'twixt you and the world. Thus saith David ben Jesse, the greatest of the kings of the earth, who is exalted above all blessing and songs of praise, mighty as a lion, strong as a bear, Sabbatai Zevi."

But Primo was more fully aware of the importance of blessings and songs of praise. And for the celebration of the ninth of Ab, he composed the following prayer: "O God our King, give us of Thy love festivals that we may make merry, and holy days and occasion for rejoicing, the day of comfort, the day on which our King, our Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi, was born, Thy servant and eldest Son,

through Thy love, in memory of the flight from Egypt."

He also issued the following instructions to the Jews for the celebration of the Messiah's birthday: on that day they were not to frequent the company of any Gentile or do any work unless it were to perform music in the synagogue. They were also to read certain passages of the Book of Creation, Genesis, and certain psalms, and to say special prayers which Sabbatai had composed for them. And above all they were to feast and make merry.

This attempt on the part of Sabbatai, this attack on the great and holy *Tisha be' Ab*, which was deeply embedded in the heart of every Jew, was a test of his power. For both supporters and adversaries it was an incredible act of provocation. But Sabbatai survived the test. The *people* stood it. The new element that had entered their lives had burst the most sacred bonds and longed to realize its rights—the joy of life. Who would not burst the heaviest fetters if happiness could be won thereby?

The rejoicings in Constantinople were unparalleled. All Primo's commands were carried out to the letter. Nobody doubted that Sabbatai Zevi was qualified to inaugurate a new religious code, while the promise to which he gave expression in a letter to his followers in Ismir was received with feelings of the deepest sympathy and reverence. It was to the effect that all who went to his mother's grave and laid their hands on it would acquire as much merit in the eyes of God as if they had visited the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Thus he made his mother's grave a holy place, equal in historic importance to the grave of their great ancestress Sarah in the cave of Machpelah near Hebron.

In due course Sabbatai abolished another fast day, the seventeenth of Tammuz, the day commemorating the fall of Jerusalem. In its place he instituted a new feast day, the twenty-third of Tammuz, which was first celebrated on July 26, 1666. This day, he declared, was the seventh after he had received his call to be the Messiah and must therefore be observed as the holiest of Sabbaths. On that day four thousand Jews gathered together at Abydos. They cheerfully obeyed without a murmur and kept holy a Sabbath Day that fell in the middle of the week.

Meanwhile, various confirmatory signs reached Sabbatai from the outside world. Gentiles fell a prey to the power of suggestion reaching them from their Jewish neighbours and went over to Judaism. A Dervish, clad in white, suddenly made his appearance and preached the advent of the Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi. The Turks were annoyed and had the Dervish thrashed. But he continued to preach. They shut him up in a lunatic asylum, but still he did not stop preaching. So they set him free, and he continued preaching about Sabbatai Zevi.

There was also a Jew named Moses Suriel who staggered through the streets contorted with ecstatic frenzy, prophesying the Day of Redemption and calling on the people to repent. Crowds followed him. Wherever he appeared there were scenes of violence and mad conflicts. The Turks complained to the Grand Vizier. Utterly at a loss what to do, the latter left it to the guardians of the community to restore order. But what could they do? They appealed to Sabbatai, who ordered Suriel to appear before him. He obeyed. They had a private interview, after which Suriel again paraded the streets ecstatically shouting that Re-

demption was at hand and calling on the people to repent.

Those among Sabbatai's disciples and adherents who were still troubled by vague doubts and felt that he could not continue holding court levees, issuing proclamations, and performing signs and wonders for ever and that something new and decisive must happen, were reassured about this time by a letter that reached Abydos from Nathan Ghazati. In this letter it was stated that Sabbatai Zevi would be crowned before the year was out. The letter was circulated far and wide and Sabbatai resolved to take preliminary steps for the event. He appointed three men to go as royal ambassadors to Amsterdam, Venice, and Leghorn. The appointment was duly confirmed, but Primo would not allow the ambassadors to leave for their destinations. He was ever the wisest of Sabbatai's servants.

Any who still showed signs of hostility received short shrift. A certain wealthy merchant in Constantinople, for instance, continued to feel somewhat uneasy about the Sabbataian movement, and accordingly presented himself before the Grand Vizier and explained that he did not approve of it, and wished to make it clear that he was not taking any part in what was going on or supporting it in any way. But the people had their revenge. They suborned witnesses to swear before a court of law that he had been guilty of high treason, and he was sent to the galleys. From Ismir complaints, probably inspired by la Papa, reached Constantinople regarding Sabbatai's irreligious life. But Constantinople was no longer the Constantinople of yore, and the only reply the plaintiffs received was a *Nidui*, a sort of ban, signed by fifty scholars. "As it is written in the Thora, may every calamity pursue you

until ye be converted!" All this pointed to the conclusion that the Messiah was not a prisoner. He was the Almighty, whose power increased every day and every hour, and for whom a crown was prepared and ready.

Thus it was small wonder that many communities, boasting of having among them intelligent, critical, philosophically trained, and highly enlightened men, regarded it as unnecessary to investigate the Messiah's claims and joined whole-heartedly in the chorus of homage. The leaders of the Sabbataian party in Amsterdam, Pereyra and Naar, set out from their homes, with the object of accompanying Sabbatai from Constantinople to the Holy Land. When they were already on their way, a letter was sent after them from the notables of the Amsterdam community, which they were to deliver to Sabbatai in Abydos. It contained a humble inquiry from Sabbatai's followers, asking their Lord and Master what they should do. "Tell us, O Sovereign King," it ran, "what course we should adopt and what we should do. Shall we immediately arise and go to God's house and throw ourselves at the feet of Thy Holiness, or shall we await the grace of God until the day when all our brothers and sisters that are scattered abroad shall have been gathered together?" The most prominent members of this important community signed the letter, the first signature being that of the distinguished philosopher and freethinker, Benjamin Mussafia.

The Portuguese community of Hamburg had also resolved to perform a similar act of homage, and in their records we read: "In view of the good news which has reached us through reports from Ismir and other communities, and has confirmed our hopes of the salvation for

which we long, our President, full of pious zeal" summoned a meeting. "It was resolved at the meeting to send envoys to Constantinople from this community, to do homage on our behalf to our King Sabetay Seby, the Anointed of the Lord God of Jacob (may his Name live for ever and his power increase day by day!)." But the idea was abandoned, in the first place because it was feared the letter might fall into the hands of strangers, and secondly—and this provides striking proof of the absolute certainty of their faith—because it was thought it would reach Constantinople too late, and that long before the messenger had arrived in that city Sabbatai would be in Jerusalem. "We hope, however, and regard it as certain, that *nosso rey*, our King, will be in Eretz Israel before this reaches you. . . . May the Lord God of Israel rejoice our hearts with the news for which we long, and grant that we may soon see the great day, in honour of His Holy Name."

In Hamburg the reality of their connexion with the great event entered into the smallest details of the people's everyday lives. Thus it was considered necessary to frame a law against lese-majesty, and to impose a fine of five thalers, to be paid into the Poor Box, on anybody who said a word against the Messiah or his prophet, and on any one who, having heard anything of the kind, failed to report it to the president of the community. On threat of a similar fine, it was announced from the pulpit of the synagogue "that all wagers on the coming of the Day of Redemption (and God grant it come soon!) are henceforward forbidden. Whosoever engageth in such wagers with Gentiles shall be liable to a fine of ten thalers."

Now, we know that laws and regulations always follow

a state of affairs that has become menacing and intolerable.

Finding that he was met with obedience, Sabbatai was encouraged to issue further royal edicts. A communication he addressed to the Rabbis of Constantinople reads as follows: "Thus speaketh the great King, Our Lord: my greetings to all believing peoples, who love me that I may make them friends through their common heritage to possess the Good. I shall fill their treasure houses with blessings both material and spiritual, and that my humble followers may be blessed with virtue the Lord saith: blessed be they also who are of my faith, both men and women, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. Blessed be they, I say, out of the mouth of the Great God, and out of the mouth of his servant, his chosen. Let it hereby be known unto you that on the Sabbath when that portion of the Law is read which beginneth, 'If ye walk in my statutes' . . . (Leviticus xxvi, 3), God saw my wretchedness and on my spirit did He cast His eyes and He filled me with great joy, for that I beheld and marked that the day of hope so long desired had come for Israel. Let this be enough for the nonce."

This had the tone of a royal proclamation couched in confident terms and in vague but sonorous phrases. And, remembering that men are pleased even by indefinite promises, he loved them for their confidence, in the sunshine of which he thrived and became mild, sentimental and sympathetic: "May the All-Highest in His Truth and Mercy grant that the comfort I felt in reading the following words may increase and endure:

"'And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.'"

It is possible, nay probable, that Sabbatai was not himself responsible for these decrees and letters, but only signed what Primo laid before him. A man who could speak, sing, weep, and rejoice with such lack of restraint as Sabbatai had not the hand capable of writing with serenity and ease in a deeply emotional style. We know of only one letter of this period which is certainly of his own composition; it is short and jerky in style, and full of convulsive ejaculations like the speeches he addressed to his followers and disciples.

But for achieving results in the outside world, this was of no consequence. The masses regarded these decrees and letters as the most valuable and unique documents. And thus they produced the desired effect, and as the belief in a Messiah was woven into the everyday life of the people, these documents played a part in every function they performed. They were in very truth on the eve of great events. So it was high time to be up and doing! In many of the synagogues, Sabbatai Zevi's initials were set up with a wreath of flowers round them, surmounted by a crown bearing the words, "The crown of Sabbatai Zevi." Additions were made to the prayers, and God was invoked: "Bless our Lord and King, the holy and righteous Sabbatai Zevi, the Messiah of the God of Jacob." Here and there were still a few unbelievers, who refused to utter this blessing, and they were forced to remain standing in the synagogue while it was being recited, and to acknowledge it with a loud and emphatic Amen. In the prayer books the portrait of Sabbatai Zevi was placed beside that of King David, and it was said that in Italy babies were being given the name of Sabbatai. A report from Leghorn stated

that many Jews with their families were moving to Alexandria to be nearer Jerusalem, and that every day scores of others were preparing to follow their example. People were seen carrying packages of clothing and dried food-stuffs, so that they might be provided for on the long journey. Michael Buchenroedern, the Pastor and Superintendent of Heldburgk, a choleric heretic-hunter, writes with bitter scorn: "They (the Jews) hearken and listen, watch and wait day and night for news of the Messiah; they call in money owing to them and pay their own debts at a loss, and squander their possessions. . . . But what is even more ludicrous is that many Jews are now having their hair cut so as to be able to hear the blast of the new Messiah's horn more easily. How readily some rascal, by standing on a hill at night near a town or city inhabited by Jews, and blowing a horn, could rouse all the Jews and make fools of them with his horn!"

And later on he observes with disgust, "Because of the uproar that has arisen both through the written and the spoken word, about the new Messiah and his prophet Nathan, the Jews have been driven into a state of such madness and confusion that many of them refuse to marry, others have ceased to take any interest in buying and selling as they were wont to do, others give themselves airs, implying that in Christian countries they will soon be standing on a higher plane than other people, while some assert and bruit it abroad that there are already many Christians who agree with the Jews." The paternal concern, which can be read in all its childlike simplicity in the last lines, was repeated elsewhere in even graver tones and with even better reason by many Christians faced with the

situation. We know that in Hamburg Christian merchants went in great dismay to their preacher Edzardi, and asked him what was to become of the Christian doctrine of the Messiah, if the reports they were receiving from their correspondents in Turkey were really true. Another merchant, writing in July of this year from Amsterdam, says:

"But now there can be no doubt whatsoever that Sabbathai Sebi is a wonderful instrument of God, and no one can any longer question the redemption of Israel."

We have already referred to the spiritual connexion between the Christian world of that day and the apocalyptic year 1666. But only very few people at that time ever troubled their heads about accounting for the primitive impressionableness of the Jews and the profound effect the rumours of the new Messiah had upon them. Pastor Buchenroedern alone, in the midst of his raving and storming, took the trouble to compile a list of "true" and obviously false Jewish Messiahs, and concluded angrily, "So, let me repeat, there is nothing new in the fact that, in this year of grace 1666, the Jews are so eager and full of longing to accept the alleged new Messiah and to return to their native land. It has not come down to them from the clouds, it is inborn in them, inherited from their fathers, and imbibed and digested with their mothers' milk."

Pastor Buchenroedern was indeed right. It was hereditary and a part of their nature. That is why everything seemed so simple and so intrinsically self-evident. To doubt was absurd. Everybody believed the legends which the Messiah's brothers, Elijah and Joseph, circulated all over the world. Everybody believed what the representatives of the Italian community and the deputation from

Aleppo reported. Truth to tell, very little importance was attached to the actual details that were reported and repeated from mouth to mouth. The people were only longing for the Messiah to perform some decisive act.

But, apart from decrees, orders, prophecies, and circular letters, there was nothing to report from the fortress of Abydos. Sabbatai remained there, week after week, month after month; he held receptions, won fresh adherents, lavished alms, and in a select circle performed ever fresh and astonishing feats of spiritual exaltation, tiresomely and monotonously uniform though they may have seemed to the spectator. Apparently all he could do was to maintain his state of ecstasy. To break through this monotonous ring and accomplish something, he would have required another powerful external agency, which for the moment was not forthcoming. He was confronted by thousands who were standing waiting. It had been his mission to call them into being. There was a large consensus of opinion at the time which agreed that it would have been quite easy for him to select twenty thousand men from his army of followers, and with the vast sums that stood at his disposal, to arm them and force the Sultan to abandon his rights over the Holy Land; for the latter had enough to keep him busy in his own country and among his neighbours. But such practical politicians forgot that violence was alien to the Messianic idea, that precisely absence of violence was its *signum*; for, after all, the final decision was expected to be reached by the Power above, and not forced by fighting and bloodshed on earth. It is impossible to say what might have happened if Sabbatai had really availed himself of the forces at his disposal. He would certainly have created

an epoch-making situation in history. But he could not rise to it. He had never been able to brace himself to anything more than speech and symbolic acts, and his powers were always limited to stimulating others and inciting them to action.

No doubts regarding the readiness of his legion of followers could have prevented Sabbatai at this unique crisis in his life from uttering the decisive word. His failure to do so, therefore, must have been prompted by doubt whether, if he spoke, the power and inspiration of his command would suffice to carry the people with him. It must have been his ever wavering and uneasy conscience that made him, at the height of his fame, seek once more for further confirmation of himself and for some prophet, other than Nathan Ghazati—a man whom, unlike the ecstatic visionary of Gaza, no one could charge with lack of clarity, and whose intellect, sobriety, and scholarly authority the whole world acknowledged. He searched the horizon for such a prophet, and found him and summoned him to him. In so doing he summoned his own executioner—nay, more tragic still, his Judas Iscariot!

In the summer of 1666 two representatives of Polish Jewry presented themselves before him with a message of homage—Loeb-Herz was one and Isaiah, the son of the Lemberg Rabbi, David Halevi was the other. Sabbatai was well aware of the importance of the Polish Jews to the movement. True, they were no longer numerous and wealthy, but their martyrdom constituted them living witnesses in the eyes of the whole Jewish world, of the misery which must precede redemption. Thus, if he could succeed in winning these two emissaries over to his cause, he might

put the coping stone to his work. In order to gain their support he did not rely so much on the forces which had served him to convert others to his cause and make them pliable instruments of his will; he exploited the pomp and dramatic accessories of a ruler and descended to the most inglorious wiles to make certain of success.

They were not admitted to his presence immediately but were first made to leave Abydos and go to Constantinople where they were referred to Abraham Jachini and the circle of minor prophets who had gathered about him. There they were given confirmation of the miraculous discovery of the prophetic manuscript, while they were also smothered beneath reports of divine prophecies, manifestations, miracles, and signs. What could they do but believe? From Jachini they were handed over to Primo, who was in Abydos, whither they accordingly had to return. They arrived on the twenty-third of Tammuz, the new Sabbath instituted by Sabbatai. As they had not heard anything about it, they innocently sent a servant to the market to buy food, an act for which they were severely reprimanded by Primo.

It was from him, too, that they received further and final preparation. If to Sabbatai the movement owed occasional direct contact with a seductive personality whose impulsive gestures and stammering words, laden with emotion, gave it fresh impetus, it received from Primo the grandeur and beauty of formal cadences and of smooth and stirring speech. He was, as it were, the editor of the ecstasies, the gifted, almost demoniacal journalist of Messianic ideas, which he endowed with a peculiar power of stirring the hearts of men even at a distance. It was he who

framed the decrees. The utterances of men like Jachini and Nathan Ghazati, compared with his, were like tangles of brightly coloured wools by the side of clear crystal. He could condense the imponderabilia of the moment into a precise proclamation which made them visible and intelligible even from afar. He knew exactly the right note to strike and possessed the art of making what he wished accessible to the brains and hearts of those who desired to believe. Nay more, he gave to all that happened, all the half-hearted decisions, vague suggestions, and unauthenticated rumours, the dangerous stamp of irrevocability, by setting them to the metallic rhythm of the written word. He made every second, all that took place in it, immortal and unforgettable, eagerly listening for every word that fell from the lips of the Messiah to seize hold of it and put it into shape. And in this way he built up a mountain of facts behind Sabbatai, which it was impossible for the latter to disavow, and which stood immovable behind his dread of a final irrevocable decision. Thus Primo became the Messiah's evil genius. He would not allow him to forget. True, he could not force him to make up his mind to act, but he piled up about him the evidence of yesterday and the day before, from the mass of which, of sheer necessity and through the inner power of its accumulated energy, the deed must be born.

In addition to this self-appointed task, he always received the deputations from the communities, to prepare them to take the seed. Not only did he bind the Messiah to his own utterances, but he constantly loaded him with fresh crushing burdens of trust and confidence, which reached him from all quarters. It was inevitable that the

Messiah should one day be forced to give way before the pressure from within and without.

What was the reason of Primo's deep imperturbable and passionate devotion to the Cause? Was he attached to Sabbatai Zevi as a man? Or, like thousands of others, was he attached to the idea? Was it the hope of being nearest to the throne of the Messiah that influenced him? Or was it that he found an outlet in the work for his devilry and cared little about the cause he served? His task absorbed him so completely that his personality was submerged, with the result that nothing but vague legends have come down to us about him as a man and an individual. It is only in connexion with his subsequent life that the chroniclers, with some severity, record a few bare facts of great spiritual importance. For instance, when everything was over, when the Messiah had fallen and the great movement had degenerated into fruitless sectarianism, we find that Primo repented and renounced the errors of his passionate youth, and settled down as a Rabbi in Adrianople. And it was he who pronounced the *Cherem*, the great ban, against the man who showed the greatest creative genius in bringing the Sabbataian ideal to spiritual perfection, the fervent enthusiast, Abraham Cardozo!

But, for the time being, Primo was still preoccupied with his Messiah and his idea. And after having subjected the Polish envoys to a thorough preparation, he at last allowed them to have audience of Sabbatai.

They approached him as children approach their father, to lay before him and bewail all the cruel distress and poverty which had overtaken them and their people in Poland, from the aftermath of which they were still suf-

fering. But Sabbatai was not a loving father. He would not allow them to finish. He knew all they wished to tell him. There were publications enough on the subject! One of them, "Beneath the Burden of Time" (*Zok ha'ittim*), was lying in front of him. It was a report in rhyme full of the most ghastly details, breathing indignation bordering on hatred. As evidence of his knowledge of the subject and proof of the superfluosity of their complaints, Sabbatai showed them this work. For he did not wish to hear other people talk; he wished to talk himself! At that moment all that mattered was himself and the impression he created, and he exerted himself to the utmost. He was wearing a red gown, and had had the Thora scroll, which stood in his room, bound in a red cover. Pointing first to the one and then the other, he said, "Do you know why my gown and this cover are red?" As they waited in reverent silence, he explained by a quotation from Isaiah: "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

The emissaries understood. Truth to tell, they had a more subtle understanding of it than Sabbatai himself, who at a moment when salvation and emancipation were at hand, spoke to the world of vengeance. And they replied that it was precisely the Jews in Poland who, by their suffering and martyrdom, had earned every right to salvation.

But he refused to vouchsafe them the comfort of lamenting their lot. Once more he was full of his own mission and importance, and quoted another verse from the Bible: "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood." And as he was ever ready to yield to the suggestion of his own words, he

became more and more drunk with excitement every moment, and was thus able to allow that influence to radiate from him which had already made so many succumb. He began to rave, to prophesy and to speak words of comfort and consolation. He referred to passages in the Kabala, recited and interpreted obscure lines, and filled himself and his listeners with enthusiasm. Then suddenly becoming profoundly melancholy, he sang in his sonorous voice the verse out of Lamentations: "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us." And overcome by the pathos of this appeal, he shed tears of genuine emotion. The emissaries wept too, doubly stirred by what was taking place at the moment and by their own recollections. But he suddenly changed his tone again and raised himself and them out of their gloom into a mood of ecstatic joy. As though he were convulsed with happiness, he danced round the room singing his favourite song: "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." He did not abide by the strict letter of the text, as it had been handed down, but modified it slightly. The scholars and emissaries who were on the alert must have interpreted this as a prophetic utterance. He sang "The right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly." Thus quite unconcernedly he had the self-assurance to anticipate a great promise. And instead of "I shall not die but live," he said, "Aye, I shall give life, I shall waken the dead!" The two emissaries, deeply moved, humbly bowed their heads. Seeing that he had won them both, he became more human, more friendly with them. He asked them questions and allowed them to talk to him. He knew Isaiah's father, the Rabbi of Lemberg, by repute and inquired after him. When he heard that he was ill, he gave his son a gold bro-

cade scarf for him, telling him that as soon as he put it on he would be well. But he learnt something more on this occasion. He heard that in Poland there lived a famous and extremely learned Kabbalist, Nehemia ha' Kohen, who had also prophesied that the Messiah would come about this time. In a vision he had seen God setting the crown on the head of a Messiah in the year 5408. True, he had not mentioned the name of this Messiah. But Sabbatai attached no importance to that. As far as he was concerned it was enough that this man had announced his Messiahship and was a fresh witness to be won over to his cause. As soon as Nehemia arrived in Abydos, it would not take him long to discover the real name of the Messiah.

When the emissaries took their leave, Sabbatai gave Isaiah a letter for his father. In it was the following passage: "Soon I shall avenge you and comfort you as a mother comforteth her child. The comfort shall be twofold, for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." And in the full depth and strength of his conviction, he signed, "David ben Jesse, the Anointed of the God of Jacob and Israel, who has been set above all earthly kings, Sabbatai Zevi." And as though he did not wish to make the object of his letter too obvious, he put a postscript to say that he would be glad to see "the prophet Nehemia" as soon as possible.

The emissaries set out on their return journey and at every stopping-place gave enthusiastic accounts of the Messiah and the impression he had made upon them. The effect of the letter which they bore, and of their glowing account of their visit was far greater than Sabbatai could possibly have hoped. The wildest excitement prevailed in

the wake of the travellers, particularly in the German communities.

On reaching home they handed Nehemia ha' Kohen the Messiah's summons, and without a word of objection or a moment's hesitation, the "prophet" set forth on his journey. He was no longer young and was not used to the exertion of travelling. But with calm and unquestioning faith he spent three months on the journey in order to obey the Messiah's command. But in addition to this, he was also entrusted with a special mission; for the various Polish communities, who had supplied the money for his journey, expected a precise and detailed report of the whole Messianic question by way of return. The Polish Jews, who were just as eager to believe and to hope and were awaiting the long promised day of salvation quite as anxiously as any other Jewish community, had, however, through their exclusive study of the Talmud, wandered further than the rest of their co-religionists from the primitive faith based on the Bible. They loved to weigh possibilities, and were consequently prone to doubt. Faith was good but knowledge was better. Even if the heart said Yea, the authoritative acquiescence of the brain was surely also necessary. No one was more profoundly impregnated with this spirit than Nehemia ha' Kohen.

He reached Abydos in September 1666 and was received with the utmost deference. From the very first his importance as a new prophet of the Messiah was recognized. But he had too little regard for worldly prosperity and external trappings to be impressed by them and it was with feelings of secret mistrust that he beheld all the pomp and luxury with which the Messiah was surrounded. True, he

was entitled to a brilliant setting, and wealth and magnificence were indissolubly connected with the idea of kingship. But Nehemia's life of frugal poverty was no exception in the community to which he belonged and he came from a region where the deaths of hundreds of thousands and grinding misery were all too closely associated with daily life. The contrast, therefore, was all the more striking and disquieting.

Before salvation came suffering. Nehemia knew that his people had suffered and he hoped it was for the last time. But what man could be expected to rise from such depths of woe, as it were in a night, to be confronted by the irresponsible, somewhat boisterous, and unrestrained rejoicing to which Sabbatai introduced him? For one who had seen thousands of his co-religionists massacred before his eyes, the thought of salvation was connected, not with dancing, singing and magnificent banquets, but with the fearsome and solemn notes of the Shofar. The life about Sabbatai was too restless, noisy, and frivolous to please him. As a visitor who in his heart was hostile to the life of the senses and quite unworldly, he was offended by the Oriental luxury and lavish display he beheld. His sense of decency was outraged by the sight of Sarah, holding her court beside the Messiah, enlisting her beauty in the work of proselytism, and interfering with matters which concerned men alone. He would have liked with one wave of his hand to sweep all this away and clear the path for the object for which he had been summoned and dispatched. And, unlike the Polish emissaries who had preceded him, he protested against the clamour, the fulsome emotions and the torrent of words that overwhelmed him,

and insisted on converting the blustering monologue into a clear-cut duologue, during which he proceeded to make harsh and searching inquiries.

In the Messianic edifice which had been revealed to him, he detected two flaws, which had already been visible from afar. Sabbatai Zevi called himself the Messiah ben David. Very well! The great Kabbalist had no objection to that, for he knew probably better than most people that such a Messiah must come, and that his advent was over-due. He was even ready to acknowledge that the current year was the apocalyptic year, although according to the Zohar it should have been 1648, not 1666. But who could tell whether God had not intentionally caused the delay? This did not incline him, however, to renounce a single iota of what was written and therefore could not be gainsaid.

Now it was written that the Messiah would be a man of sorrow and laden with grief. He would be persecuted and humiliated, made to suffer pain and poverty. All this was inevitable, since by his sufferings he was to do expiation for the sins of the whole world, and this not by his death but by his life. It was not by the sacrifice of death that he would set men free but by the self-sacrificing nature of his life.

Did Sabbatai Zevi answer to this description? What had he suffered, endured and undergone? Nehemia ha' Kohen here touched upon what had already been recognized to be a weak point by Nathan Ghazati, and which he had endeavoured to conceal in all his manifestoes, by emphasizing the Messiah's eighteen years of restless wandering. Sabbatai Zevi also called attention to this. Every obstacle in his way, every refusal to recognize him, every

distressing incident, he had regarded as so many stages in his career of affliction. But Nehemia ha' Kohen looked upon all this as an extremely slender foundation for his assumption of martyrdom. For, after all, he had never known what it was to be poor. From his earliest youth he had been a member of a well-to-do family. He had always been able to make a display of wealth. He had always had banquets arranged for him whenever he wished, and the opposition he had encountered had never disturbed his peace of mind and self-assurance. What he regarded as a curse in the tragic sense seemed to Nehemia ha' Kohen merely an inglorious surrender, an unheroic lack of courage, though he was ready to acknowledge that Sabbatai's spiritual experiences, his conflicts with his own soul, his feelings of pity and doubt, and his violent emotional upheavals, together constituted what might be termed suffering. But there still remained the other prerequisite. It was surely written that before the advent of the Messiah ben David who was to bring ultimate salvation, a forerunner, the Messiah ben Joseph was to come, whose particular fate was described in Holy Writ. He would be called upon to fight his people's foes, who in the Bible were called Gog and Magog, be defeated by them, and ultimately fall before the gates of Jerusalem. But his death would rank as a sacrifice; it would smooth the way for the Saviour who came after him, the Messiah ben David, and facilitate his eventual triumph.

Hence Sabbatai was asked, "You surely know that before you the Messiah of the House of Benjamin must come?"

Sabbatai agreed. The next question to be asked, there-

fore, was: "If you are the Messiah of the House of David, then the Messiah ben Joseph must already have appeared." To which came the reply, "Yes, he has already appeared." Nehemia was quite ready to believe this. He was ready to believe anything that could be proved to him. But without such proof he refused to believe anything whatsoever. While Sabbatai may have been a fanatic of the heart, Nehemia was a fanatic of the brain. Both were aflame with enthusiasm, but on different planes. Both were unreservedly prepared to reach the same goal through faith, but unfortunately their paths ran in parallel lines that could meet only in infinity, unless a third straight line were to intersect them both and supply a definite connecting link. And the link required was—proof! Sabbatai had to prove to Nehemia when and where the Messiah ben Joseph had appeared. As he had already been forced to meet many similar objections, Sabbatai was ready for this argument, and was not at a loss for a reply. And thus he repeated, possibly with some embellishments and certainly with assurance born of asserting the same thing again and again until it becomes a concrete subjective truth, the story of which the following is the outline: At the time of the Polish massacres, a certain humble poor and unknown Jew named Joseph had played the part of martyr, and died for God's sake, thus fulfilling his mission which was to be the sacrificial victim who prepared the way for the Messiah who was to follow.

Hitherto nobody had been able to resist the persuasiveness and graphic detail which Sabbatai imparted to this narrative. But Nehemia ha' Kohen remained unconvinced and unmoved. He was ready to believe even this story; but

once more his point of contact, the proof, was lacking. What was there surprising or exceptional in the fact that an unknown Polish Jew had died for God's sake? Thousands, tens of thousands had done so. With simple unquestioning faith and superhuman resignation, they had allowed themselves to be hacked to pieces and burned at the stake, and thus every one of them had the right to be considered the Messiah ben Joseph. In their heart of hearts, they all believed they were serving the great ultimate purpose and end. But that was not the point. There could only have been one Messiah ben Joseph, and it was for Sabbatai to prove to him conclusively who it was that God had chosen from all the throng to be the bearer of this great office. Three hundred thousand victims—aye! But there could have been only one whose sacrificial death constituted a decisive advance in the work of salvation. Who was this man then?

Sabbatai grew embarrassed. The fellow unnerved him! How unspeakably cruel, with a wave of the hand to ignore the deaths of three hundred thousand people, merely because the particular one whose demise had determined the fate of the Messianic movement could not be named! Everybody else had been perfectly ready to believe that among all those thousands there had been one unknown hero who had fulfilled his mission. But this man, who had himself prophesied the advent of the Messiah, demanded proofs, because the road to faith lay through his brain!

But, among other gifts, Sabbatai had the capacity of adapting himself to circumstances. As he could advance no more cogent proof than that of his own personal conviction, he diverted the discussion into a channel in which

he hoped to be able to defeat the Kabbalist. He began to argue, and, in order to lead his opponent away from the thorny problem of the Messiah ben Joseph, he tried to prove in general terms that the hour for the Messiah had come and that he himself had been called.

It was a perilous undertaking; for Nehemia ha' Kohen was in no way his inferior in knowledge, and since his mind had not been unbalanced by ecstasies and emotional upheavals, the Polish scholar was unquestionably his superior in sober judgment. Thus, hour after hour, with stubborn persistence, question and answer, argument and counter-argument, statement and refutation followed hot on each other's heels. At last the shades of evening fell. Neither of the disputants was tired, neither was convinced. It grew dark, and they were still facing each other, poles asunder. Nehemia was a prophet, but he did not wish to be the prophet of this Messiah! And if Sabbatai did not give him proofs, he would have to forgo his claim for ever. With burning anguish Sabbatai felt this. Thus his efforts to convince his opponent grew ever more strenuous, for he soon perceived that it was not this man's opinion that was now at stake, but his own justification of himself.

The night went by, and when the day was far advanced they were still arguing. Gradually a fatal change had come over their respective parts in the debate. The more passionately Sabbatai struggled to be recognized, the more peevishly did Nehemia draw back into his defensive position, his suspicions increasing every moment. The ponderous and weighty quotations from the Talmud, Midrash, and Zohar, no longer served to support the general contention that the Messiah might appear there and then, or that

he had not yet appeared. But they certainly availed to raise the question whether the sayings, knowledge and prophecies of this particular pretender, Sabbatai Zevi, whether the circumstances of his birth and career, the significance of his deeds, proclamations and circular letters, and his strange manner of life in Abydos, gave him the right to call himself the Messiah of the Jews. And as this second day went by, and Nehemia questioned and examined everything, he slowly changed from an attitude of inquiry to one of attack. Sabbatai made laborious and passionate efforts to defend himself and save his position, and, while his followers stood breathless and anxious in the background, the catastrophe occurred. It was a case of brain versus heart, proof versus faith, divine mission versus human claims, clear statements versus the dangerous twilight of self-deception. At last the second day drew to a close, and from the bowels of the earth came a menacing vibration which shook the hastily constructed edifice of the Messianic idea of salvation.

On the third day, the final stage in the exchange of positions had been reached. His deliberate examination and rejection of Sabbatai's claims, his relentless judgment on all he had seen and heard, led Nehemia to a final conviction, to a state of fanatical certainty about the man before him. The mantle of prophet fell from his shoulders, and conscience and a sense of responsibility towards the Jewish people impelled him to undertake a very different task. And thus he became the accuser and Sabbatai the accused. In mighty wrath Nehemia ha' Kohen rose up and pronounced judgment. "Thou art a false Messiah!" he cried. "Thou hast misled the people and lied unto them!"

Thy divine mission is a fraud. According to our Law there is but one punishment for thee—death!”

Before this devastating accusation Sabbatai sought refuge in exhausted silence. He did not yet admit that he was defeated, but for the first time in his life he had been rendered helpless. He had always been able to meet previous attacks by means of evasion, diversion, or even flight. But against this blow he was unable to defend himself. It had struck at that capacity in him with which he had hitherto always smothered incipient doubt, and from which he had drawn his unscrupulousness, the unscrupulousness which led him to accept as genuine Jachini's hoary manuscript, although he knew it to be a forgery. It was his capacity for hiding the truth beneath the figments of his morbid and excitable powers of imagination. And it was this side of his nature that Nehemia had unmasked. For, if a man equips the images of his brain with the power to impress, inspires them with the fluorescence of his own personality, and offers them to mankind as genuine and authentic realities, when they are expecting facts in reply to their time-honoured questions, he is guilty of an act of deception although the fraud is so convincing that it deceives even himself and gives him the illusion of reality.

Sabbatai's followers, who had watched this three days' dispute and its result with breathless anxiety, were perhaps incapable of such considerations. But with almost blinding clarity they saw that if Nehemia, this zealot, were to leave the fortress, he would proceed to proclaim his unmasking of the false Messiah, just as he had once announced the advent of the true Messiah. And he would act

with the same determination as he had shown in this three days' battle, when he had struggled from the position of inquirer to that of sceptic, and from that of sceptic to that of judge. He would bring the whole authority of his vast knowledge to bear, and what a man like Sasportas had failed to do with his letters, this fanatic of knowledge and brain would succeed in accomplishing. He would split and paralyse the movement, and would do it at this critical moment in its history when all the forces at Sabbatai's disposal were eagerly waiting to make a general frontal advance.

Impossible! Nothing must be allowed to interfere with the movement now! The faith of Sabbatai's followers must not be shaken, or even put to the test at this juncture! Nehemia might also appeal to the Turkish authorities, and inform them about the false Messiah. This danger must be averted. It was surely obvious to all that they did not dare to lay hands on Sabbatai Zevi because, in spite of the lies he had told at first, they believed him to be the Messiah. But as soon as this belief was shattered, nothing could save him from the fate of an ordinary rebel.

These considerations, which took but a moment to weigh, led to the terrible conclusion that Nehemia must be silenced. He must not be allowed to leave the fortress alive! The individual must be sacrificed for the sake of the Cause. Nehemia felt the silence that followed his accusation and immediately pricked up his ears. He heard mutterings and whisperings in the background, suddenly saw faces full of evil resolution and figures beginning to move towards him. In an instant he seized the situation—his life was in danger! He sprang to his feet, and violently pushing his

way through the still unclosed ring of Sabbataians, he reached the door of the room. Behind him, along the corridor and down the stairs, his pursuers hurried, shouting and screaming after him. But mortal terror, or a fanatical determination to give his message to the world before he died, lent him strength. He reached the gate and was out. Close on his heels was a band of men determined to kill him. In front of him was the crowd, camping out as usual on the open square in front of the fortress—Jews and Mohammedans all herded together. Suddenly he had a marvellous inspiration. Flinging his fur-trimmed cap to the ground, he dashed up to the nearest Moslem, and tearing his green turban from his head, put it on his own. The Kabbalist, Nehemia ha' Kohen, who had prophesied the coming of the Jewish Messiah ben David for the Jewish people, had by this symbolic action decisively and irrevocably gone over to Islam! His pursuers shrank back in horror. They were not allowed to touch a Mohammedan. And they could not have reached him even if they had tried, for he was already surrounded by a solid block of people who had immediately grasped that a Jew fleeing from his own people had saved himself by coming to them and surrendering to the only true faith. The Sabbataians were forced to let things take their course. In a moment they saw Nehemia raised above the heads of the crowd, his features hard as stone, and heard him shouting across the square at the top of his voice demanding to be taken to the Sultan in Adrianople to enlighten him about the false Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi.

His hearers were naturally anxious to accede to his request and while inside the "Citadel" the air was heavy

with silent fear and anxious listening, the Mohammedan Nehemia stood before the representative of Mehmed IV, and with clear and sober arguments denounced the liar, fraud, swindler, and rebel, to believe in whom he had journeyed all the way from Poland.

Thus did the catastrophe come about!

Was Nehemia's conversion to Islam due to the panic in which a man acts when his life is threatened and he wishes to save it? He was surely not a man to be frightened by the proximity of death! He himself subsequently declared, when he left Turkey and returned to Judaism, that he seized the turban only for the purpose of unmasking the false Messiah and saving his people from a great disappointment. But it would seem that behind this extraordinary resolve there was also an element of resignation and despair, that it was the action of a man who in spite of all had remained a child at heart, and whose instinctive reaction, on hearing that a long-cherished, secret hope had been destroyed, was to try to do away with himself.

He never felt quite happy about the way he saved himself in this crisis. The same power that had forced him to stifle the belief in the Messiah in his own heart had also dealt a mortal blow to his whole life, his whole spiritual orientation. For when, in course of time, Sabbatai had ceased to be anything but a tiresome and dubious figure, and had sunk to the level of a sectarian, the incessant mutability of things at last led Nehemia's stout heart to master his brain, and the destroyer of the Messiah professed himself to be his most ardent disciple, so much so, indeed, that he spent his time telling people about Sabbatai Zevi, rav-

ing over him, and reporting miracles he had never performed. His passionate heart even disposed of the great objection which had once been so fatal to the Messiah—the absence of the Messiah ben Joseph. “For I myself,” he declared, “am the Messiah ben Joseph. I shall die before the gates of Jerusalem and prepare the way for my Messiah.”

But he was no longer believed. Among the Polish communities, wherever he turned with his revelations, he was looked at askance and cast out. And he was obliged to wander ever further afield, a roving fugitive, with the mark of Cain upon his brow. And thus he travelled through Poland, Germany, and Holland. He may even have set off on the road to Jerusalem to die before its gates. But the conflicts in his soul had broken his spirit and his resolution. Like a legendary figure he ranged the country, allowing the people to gather round him and listen to all he had to tell. It is said that he became a beggar and called himself Jacob Namirov, and that he was a great Talmud scholar and exponent although he was quite mad. Nothing certain is known about his death (some say it occurred in 1682, others in 1696), or where he was buried. He simply vanished.

But this much at least is known, that in the last years of his life he called himself, as the Messiah Sabbatai Zevi in the eagerness of hope had once called him, the prophet Nehemia.

CHAPTER XII

The Renegade

IN Adrianople, the Sultan, Mehmed IV, was filled with anxiety. It was not the anxiety usually felt by a sovereign of his line, inspired by foreign foes or hidden threats lurking in the apartments of his own palace; these were menaces against which he could defend himself. An army hurled against a foreign foe, a scimitar or rope applied to the neck of an enemy at home, could restore equanimity to his soul. He was responsible to no one for the lives of those he put out of the way.

But the seriousness of the fears that were harassing him at this moment was due to the fact that he did not know how to be rid of them. Weak things had an ill-omened pertinacity peculiar to themselves. They were elusive; blows directed against them had a way of miscarrying. A people in open rebellion could be dealt with. They could be quelled by violence. But a people aflame with enthusiasm were fed from subterranean sources, and it was impossible to say whether their numbers, which were still small and not unwieldy, would not increase beyond control. To judge from the representatives who were flocking to Gallipoli from every quarter of the globe, they were already beginning to assume menacing proportions. He had had

reports drawn up in which he had read the names of such places as Lemberg, Cracow, Warsaw, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Leghorn, Venice, Cairo, Jerusalem, Ismir, Salonica, Aleppo, Ispahan, and Teheran.

A whole world seemed to be on the eve of mobilization. The leaders had already arrived, and the people were making preparations in their own homes. A host of unarmed crusaders was about to march forth. And as had been the case in the days of old, the prize to be won was a country which was under the rule of the Crescent. And he was expected to surrender it. In the first instance, however, the naked sword had been the menace, and the conflict had raged around a definite tract of land. But now it was a fight without violence, and the dispute concerned the whole Empire, the whole territory under his sway, the very might of his sceptre. And as an expression of their intention to pull him down from his throne, their Messiah, Sabatai Zevi, had taken up his residence close by.

It was only natural that Mehmed IV should cling to his throne. He was twenty-three and had come into power as a boy of nine when his father Ibrahim, at the instigation of his own mother, was murdered by the janissaries. And Mehmed knew that this grandmother was also conspiring to take his life. The picture of that night still rose vividly before his eyes. A helpless child, he had hurled himself with shrieks of fright and horror into the arms of the officer of the guard, while men's heads were being split open by axes over priceless carpets, and out in the garden mad soldiers were strangling the traitress, while the green flag floated from the walls of the seraglio summoning the people to wage a holy war against his army. It was not due to

his own efforts that everything had ended well, and he had not derived much pleasure from kingship.

And now his crown was to be taken from him. He would not have minded so much if the man, at whose bidding he was to retire into oblivion, had at least been a Turk, for he was well aware that one day a Messiah would come and gather unto himself all the crowns of the world. His objection to this Messiah was that he was a Jew.

He accordingly summoned the Kaimakam, Mustapha Pasha, to him and vented his fear and anger on his head. Why were they allowing him to be pestered by such annoyances? Why was this madness tolerated in his immediate neighbourhood? The ninth of Ab had just gone by, and instead of weeping and wailing in the austere atmosphere of the synagogues, he had heard wild rejoicing, singing, music, and drunken revelry, while riotous processions had stampeded through the streets as though all care were at an end.

Mustapha Pasha was ready to put an end to the business if the Sultan wished him to do so, and gave him express orders to that effect. But he could not and would not interfere of his own accord. These orders, however, were not forthcoming. This monarch who enjoyed absolute power and one of whose sub-titles was "The Giver of all Crowns," broke down and was speechless because a voice within him whispered incessantly that perhaps the man might after all be the appointed Messiah. And he could not lay hands on a Messiah! So he found no rest from his fears.

But Allah loveth the faithful soul and ever sendeth him weapons against his fear. And he sent the Sultan the Polish

Jew Nehemia ha' Kohen. No, not the Jew, but the new Mohammedan, that upright, honest and outspoken man who wore a turban over his earlocks and swept away everything that for many months had tied the Sultan's hands. And his heart leapt for joy. What a relief! No Messiah! Only a man!

He dismissed Nehemia ha' Kohen with exceptionally generous gifts, thus rewarding both the bringer of good tidings and the new convert to the true faith. Not daring to decide on his own responsibility what should be done, he hurriedly summoned his royal council. True, it had been proved that the man living at Abydos was not the Messiah. But that was not enough. It was not so much the leader who constituted the difficulty as the followers. There is an ancient saying, which even Sultan Mehmed understood, that in every religious movement, whether it be a fresh creation or a revival, the greatness, power, and influence lies not in the hands of the leader but in the eager credulity of the masses, who surrender their souls to the leader, that is to say, to the idea. It is this that gives their faith its vital power, so that its development no longer depends upon the leader. At the royal council there were present the Sultan's mother, who during his minority had acted as regent in conjunction with the father of Mehmed's Grand Vizier, and still superintended important political decisions, of which the present was one; the Mufti Wanni, the religious chief and supreme authority on all state matters connected with religion; the Kaimakam Mustapha Pasha, the Grand Vizier Achmed Köprili, the political genius of the day; and the Sultan's private physician, Guidon.

They all grasped the situation so thoroughly that on one point they were in complete agreement—Sabbatai Zevi must not on any account be put to death, although instead of a Messiah he had proved himself to be a mere rebel, a criminal deserving to pay the penalty of his life. But he must not be executed, for fear lest the Jews should openly rebel. The Jews were numerous and had so much money that they could buy everything they wanted, and were not likely to squander less gold on a dead Messiah than on a living one. Besides, it was imperative not to make Sabbatai Zevi a martyr. For a martyr's death inspired a sentiment which of all others was the most enduring and most difficult to exterminate—loyalty. It also created legend, and from legend a religion often derived greater power than from reality. The object to be achieved was twofold—the Messiah was to be let live but he must be rendered harmless, whilst the movement behind him must at the same time be given its death-blow.

The Mufti Wannī, an expert in religions and a specialist in faith, found the formula—destroy loyalty and create disloyalty. They must try to convert Sabbatai Zevi to Islam. This would have various advantages. It would deprive the movement of its leader, and paralyse and destroy its faith by means of a formidable weapon which the authorities need not wield themselves, for the former leader would himself thrust his followers from him. Lastly, it would be serving the cause of the only true faith.

It was a diabolical idea and everybody was delighted. The only difficulty was to carry it out. The Mufti was aware that he could not do so himself, nor would it have been advisable for him to try. If he went in person to

Sabbatai, it would look as though the all-powerful Sultan had sent his spiritual chief to bargain and barter, which would merely fortify Sabbatai in his pride and arrogance and make him unmanageable. No, the idea must be carried out by a man who knew how to lay hold on the basic instincts, the fundamental intuitions of the Messiah. Who could tell what the soul of such a Jew contained?—Only a Jew, or a man like the royal physician Guidon, for instance, who although a Jew by birth had long since discovered the road to Islam. Perhaps the Chekim Pasha Guidon would like to give fresh proof of his devotion to his new faith by undertaking the task?

All eyes were turned towards the renegade, Guidon. As matters stood, it was impossible for him to refuse. Nor did he wish to do so. He would probably have begged to be given the task if it had not been offered him. In the heart of every renegade remnants of the old religion still lie hidden. He still has a sneaking affection for the faith of his childhood which he has not succeeded in stifling altogether, and his efforts at repudiation give rise to silent hatred. He is treacherous as Judas Iscariot, defiant as Lucifer, the fallen angel of light. A renegade merely runs away from his faith, he is never finally released from it. And the thought that he is irrevocably bound makes him long to deal a blow. He is ever on the defensive.

Thus Guidon was given a tempting opportunity of paying out his former faith, of buffeting his God of yesterday, of depriving his former associates of their hope of a Messiah. One renegade had accused Sabbatai Zevi. Another was to carry out sentence on him.

Achmed Köprili gave orders for Sabbatai to be trans-

ferred to Adrianople. On September 14, or the thirteenth of Elul, in the year 1666, after Sabbatai had enjoyed six months of inactivity in more than princely surroundings, the Grand Vizier's soldiers burst into the luxurious apartments of Abydos, undeterred by either respect or fear. For they had been told that the man was not the Messiah. And if he were no longer the Messiah the place was no longer a citadel, but a fortress which visitors were not allowed to enter. They accordingly drove out the Sabbataians. As, however, there were some like Primo, Sarah, and Sabbatai's most intimate friends who refused to go, they, too, were arrested without further ado, and taken to Adrianople. They reached that city on the fifteenth of Elul.

Indescribable excitement reigned among the Jews. Some were horrified, scenting irrevocable disaster ahead. Others were calm, seeing in what had taken place only the inevitable climax. The calmest of all was Sabbatai Zevi. Although he had been utterly defeated by Nehemia ha' Kohen only a few days previously, he had long since recovered his assurance and his consciousness of his own importance. He did not understand what was happening. He had no wish to understand. Probably he was no longer capable of doing so, for he had never lived in an atmosphere of reality but had always allowed it to overtake him, and to do so it had to burst the barrier of his overweening egocentricity. Thus he interpreted his transfer to Adrianople as the preliminary step to an audience of the Sultan. What he would have to do and say on that occasion would sooner or later be shown him. His chief preoccupation was with the forms and ceremonies he would

have to observe, for, after all, the Sultan was one of the mightiest of earthly potentates, to whom respect was due, even though God had placed him in his hands.

And thus, as soon as he arrived in Adrianople and had been taken to some remote apartment of the seraglio, he wished to be quite clear concerning the subject of this ceremonial. He knew how he, as a prince, received people, but he did not know how the Sultan did so. But he could obtain no enlightenment on this exceedingly important question. His first visitor was the Chekim Pasha Guidon, who listened gravely and courteously to his anxious inquiries about the ceremonial. But the reply of the distinguished physician was disconcertingly vague. Certainly the question of ceremonial was very important, but the main consideration was to decide whether it was Sabbatai Zevi or the Sultan who should be concerned about the matter. Then only could the form of address and conversation be determined. That is to say, it was conceivable that the Sultan, as an ordinary monarch, would have to present himself before Sabbatai, who as Messiah had been set above all earthly kings, and do him homage. It was only proper that the inferior should come to the superior. And if this were the case, Guidon said he would be much obliged if Sabbatai would kindly let him know how he expected the Sultan to behave.

If this were the case. That is to say, *if* Sabbatai were the Messiah and entitled to expect a Sultan to wait on him first. But the matter was far from clear. Mehmed IV was certainly a Sultan, there could be no doubt about that! But it still remained to be proved that Sabbatai Zevi was a Messiah. The Sultan could advance the evidence of the

senses and historical facts. But the Messiah had only his own word to give for his claim and proof was still lacking. So it would be better not to discuss ceremonial until Sabbatai had given definite, conclusive and tangible proof that he really was the Messiah! Proof!

The circumstances and the demand repeated themselves like a nightmare! In just such terms had his own prophet expressed his doubts and challenged him a few days previously. But Nehemia had doubted because he was ready to believe; this man doubted because he was filled with the hatred of the renegade and his cross-questioning constituted a different and more terrifying menace. In both cases there was danger. But whereas a few days previously it was only his position and his vocation that had been at stake, it was by no means impossible that it was now a matter of life and death. So suddenly did this idea occur to him and so unprepared was he for it that he almost broke down. All he could do was to stammer—how could it be proved?

Guidon shrugged his shoulders. That was not his affair! But he had heard it asserted in the seraglio that a Messiah, particularly a Jewish Messiah, was in God's hands, and therefore invulnerable. The Sultan, for instance, had suggested that he might be taken out into the garden and suspended naked from the gallows, whereupon a few skilful bowmen would shoot three poisoned arrows at him. If he were the Messiah the arrows would certainly rebound. In which case the Sultan declared he would be converted to Judaism and acknowledge Sabbatai Zevi as the Messiah. But if the test failed . . . Well, there was no saying what might happen.

Nehemia had demanded an intellectual proof, and it had not been forthcoming. Was it likely that he would be able to produce a concrete proof on the material plane? The arrows, or some other murderous contrivance, would prove his opponents' case. It was the end!

There was a stir at the back of the room and Samuel Primo emerged from the shadow. He had seen that the Messiah, weak and helpless and terrified out of his life, was on the point of collapsing. And with horror he felt that the man no longer possessed the strength to come to a decision. Indeed, he never had had the strength for decisive action, or the will and determination that rejoices in responsibility. However high his friends might try to pile up realities behind him, at the critical moment Sabbatai always failed to see them. And now he was going to deny his Messiahship just to save his skin!

But that could not be allowed! It was no longer merely Sabbatai Zevi but the idea of the Messiah that was at stake. Even Nehemia ha' Kohen was to have been sacrificed for the sake of the idea, not for the sake of this exponent of it. Thus at this crisis, the choice had once more to be made between the individual and the idea, between Sabbatai Zevi and the Messianic movement. The eternal idea must be set before passing events. If Sabbatai could no longer be the leader of the movement, he must at least be the martyr. As he could give no proof, he was not to try. In the circumstances, the idea would be better served by his death than by his life.

Primo brought all his eloquence to bear to make him see this, referring to his great predecessors who had died to "hallow the Name," and quoting the *Megillath Amrafel*,

the stirring work of Rabbi Abraham ben Eliezer Halevi, on the death of the martyrs. He tried to console him with the thought that, if a man on the point of dying a martyr's death uttered the Name which he had hitherto been forbidden to pronounce, he would be restored without spot or blemish to the original source of all souls, and would live in the mystic "East" released from the law of eternal re-birth. Sabbatai was perfectly ready to believe in this new part, in this new form of importance. Nevertheless, it was somewhat depressing to be snatched from the enjoyment of life and be forced to exchange the perpetual exercise of power and the performance of deeds of might for one supreme act of self-immolation—a martyr's death! At the same time it was tempting to take the fate of a whole people on one's shoulders, and by one's death make certain of being remembered for all time.

But it was Guidon's duty to prevent such a solution of the difficulty. His mission was to secure a renegade and not a martyr. He accordingly brought further pressure to bear and insisted on the necessity of proof. Sabbatai had been making extraordinary claims far too long for him to be able to continue indefinitely without producing proofs. It was not absolutely necessary for the test to take the form of three poisoned arrows. He could choose any kind of test he pleased. But he was clearly to understand that if it failed—and with cold and haughty confidence he prophesied that it would fail—then the Sultan would punish him in a manner befitting his arrogance in pretending to be the Messiah. As he seemed to have a taste for public processions, he would be led through the streets, and as he claimed to be illumined by God, the illumination would

be given outward and visible form. A burning torch would be bound to each of his limbs, and he would be left slowly to frizzle and roast in the flames. And if the dogs fancied him, his remains would go to them.

Sabbatai was defenceless against this inhuman threat. Thus brutally confronted by a ghastly death, all his desires and instincts, every aspiration and ambition, collapsed before the overwhelming desire to save his life. After all, this ascetic whose eyes were always raised to heaven loved life above all else. For, in ultimate analysis, the object of all his efforts, even when they were directed heavenwards, had been to secure rewards on earth, during his own lifetime. And as there was always something to be got out of life, even if he could no longer be the Messiah—for after all that was not so very terrible—and as the very thought of torture and suffering drove him mad with fear, he clung desperately to life and rejected all idea of martyrdom, even if he were reduced to beggary. Was there no escape? He was perfectly prepared to abandon the part of Messiah, to abdicate his power, and to recant all he had previously taught and prophesied, if only they would let him live!

Sabbatai, who had always been subjected to fits of ecstasy, now experienced a new form of it—the ecstasy of mortal terror. Hopeless and forsaken, he sought refuge and salvation at the hands of his oppressor, and the dethroned Messiah flung himself at the feet of the renegade and implored him to find a way out. “Thus does the shipwrecked mariner cling to the rock on which his ship was foundered.”

Guidon bent over him and gave him a piece of advice.

All would be well and nothing very terrible would happen, if before the whole world Sabbatai would renounce his lofty pretensions. It was a very simple matter! All he would have to do was publicly to deny his past and become a whole-hearted convert to Islam.

For a moment Sabbatai shrank in horror from this incredible alternative. He had secretly made up his mind to betray his mission and his followers, but the form his renunciation was to take seemed so terribly crude, mean, and low. A renegade was in any case a despicable creature. But for a man whose object in life had been to lead the faith of a whole people eventually to go over to the enemy was ignominious beyond description. And he hesitated.

Once more Primo appeared out of the background. Anything but that! He must not be a renegade! The people would not tolerate it!

And Guidon, benevolent and conciliatory, with something of the confidential air of a fellow-conspirator, suggested that conversion to Islam were better than torture. After all, it was a mere matter of form, a public declaration. Nobody could possibly tell what Sabbatai thought in his heart of hearts, what secret reservations he made, whether he were really acting from conviction, or only pretending to be a convert to save his life.

This clinched the matter! Springing to his feet, Sabbatai recovered his spirits and begged the Chekim Pasha Guidon to inform the Sultan that he was willing to become a convert to Islam. Bowing low, the renegade withdrew, a smile of profound satisfaction playing about his lips. As soon as his back was turned, Sabbatai's friends fell upon him with arguments, lamentations, and reproaches. But

he was adamant. As soon as he knew that he was to be allowed to live, his vital forces gained the upper hand, toying with him, suggesting possibilities and new forms of power, and urging on his capacity for adaptation to further marvellous feats. And in all this he was neither dishonest nor false. What he said to his friends he honestly believed, because there was nothing to gainsay or check him. He explained the whole affair as a fresh trial which he was bound to undergo. The Sultan's rage might turn against the whole Jewish people. He must divert it, and remain alive to carry on his work. After all, he was the appointed Messiah. Had he been ready a moment previously to deny his vocation? Certainly not! It had been a momentary aberration. A demon had whispered in his heart; he himself had had nothing to do with it. The fate that lay in store for him was all that was desirable and in keeping with God's will. What was there extraordinary about it? Even Moses, before he could lead his people up out of slavery, had been obliged to spend part of his life at the Court of the Pharaohs, observing the forms of a faith that was not his own. The mention of Moses conjured up fantastic visions to his mind and he added that he would have to remain in this situation and hide his faith until the prophet Nathan came to him and gave him Moses' staff, when he would perform miracles similar to those of his great predecessor.

His friends were silent and believed. Even Primo believed. Did he really believe, or did he believe because he wanted to? Was he persuading himself into it? No! His was the cool and calculating mind that persuaded others to believe and that once more gave birth to words designed

to fetter the irresponsible activities of the Messiah. He straightway drew up the following circular letter: "Sabbatai Zevi has become a convert to Islam. This is ordained of God. His conversion has a deep and sacred meaning. He who, as the Messiah, would redeem the sins of the world, must take upon himself the sins of every creed, and must therefore become a member of every creed. Everything is necessary. Everything will be revealed. Do not lose your faith."

Meanwhile Guidon had made his report to the Sultan, who was delighted with his success, and ordered immediate preparations to be made for a solemn ceremony on the following day, the sixteenth of Elul, which all the Court dignitaries were commanded to attend. For it was an extremely important function. Whether Sabbatai was a Messiah or a swindler, he was in any case a man who exercised a far-reaching and dangerous influence, which was sufficient reason for making his conversion as easy as possible and treating him with every consideration.

On the following morning Sabbatai was taken to the Sultan's throne room. He was dressed in a black silk robe and wore a tall Jewish cap on his head. In his usual hasty and excited manner, which made his decision appear all the more irrevocable, he disregarded the solemn ritual that had been arranged, and as soon as he entered the room, took off his cap and flung it to the ground. This was the act of renunciation. Close by he saw a page holding a cushion on which lay a turban. Going up to him, he took the turban and put it on his own head. Thus he was converted to Islam of his own accord and in his own free and impulsive manner. The Sultan beamed with delight. He

welcomed the convert, of whose secret reservations he knew nothing, gave him a new name, and acted as god-father. Henceforward Sabbatai Zevi was to be called Mehmed Effendi. But the Sultan also wished to honour and reward him, and he therefore solemnly appointed him a *Capigi Otorak*, or seraglio chamberlain. This was an important post; the official who filled it was paid a large salary and wore a special white silk uniform which the Sultan ordered to be given to Mehmed Effendi. As Sabbatai was changing his clothes behind a screen, a pound of biscuits was discovered in the trousers of his black clothes. They probably dated from a former fast, or had been placed there in readiness for a future one. It was an unfortunate discovery!

To make his conversion appear even more convincing he was also urged to take a second wife, a Mohammedan slave-girl. He obeyed. Nay more! He sent for Sarah and persuaded her to be converted also. And she was given the name of Fatima Radini.

Whereupon Mehmed Effendi returned to the rooms allotted to him in the seraglio and to which he was entitled as chamberlain. Here, it must be confessed, a mood of oppressive and terrified silence prevailed for some days. At last Sabbatai made his first pronouncement as a convert in the shape of a letter to his brothers in Ismir. It was defiant in tone, and yet an undercurrent of pain and resignation could be detected in it: "Now have done with me, for the Almighty hath made me an Ishmaelite! . . . He spake and it was so. He commanded and it came to pass! This twenty-fourth of Elul, on the ninth day of my rebirth according to divine decree."

Death Agony

THE news that the Messiah had betrayed his mission, his people, and his faith gradually became known and spread consternation far and wide. Those who lived close to the scene of the tragedy knew certain authentic details. But they were soon to hear more.

The Sultan, moved either by last remnants of fear or by the reaction after all his anxiety, gave vent to his relief by suggesting a programme which struck terror into the hearts of the Jews. Determined to prevent the repetition of any such movement as that connected with Sabatai, he wanted to banish all adult Jews from the state, to have all Jewish children compulsorily converted to Islam, and to set a terrifying example by having fifty of the most distinguished Rabbis executed. But his ministers, supported by his shrewd mother, brought all their eloquence to bear to dissuade him. Guidon's argument turned the scales. Coldly and cynically he maintained that it would be foolish to use violence and stir up passions which might prove dangerous, since it was impossible to estimate their power. The Jews were ridiculously credulous, and he was ready to wager that they would not regard Sabbatai's conversion as apostasy, but as an example set by their leader for them to follow. Thus they would of their own accord exterminate themselves. And it seemed as though the renegade's

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CHAPTER XIII

Death Agony

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The Sultan, moved either by last remnants of fear or by the reaction after all his anxiety, gave vent to his relief by suggesting a programme which struck terror into the hearts of the Jews. Determined to prevent the repetition of any such movement as that connected with Sabatai, he wanted to banish all adult Jews from the state, to have all Jewish children compulsorily converted to Islam, and to set a terrifying example by having fifty of the most distinguished Rabbis executed. But his ministers, supported by his shrewd mother, brought all their eloquence to bear to dissuade him. Guidon's argument turned the scales. Coldly and cynically he maintained that it would be foolish to use violence and stir up passions which might prove dangerous, since it was impossible to estimate their power. The Jews were ridiculously credulous, and he was ready to wager that they would not regard Sabbatai's conversion as apostasy, but as an example set by their leader for them to follow. Thus they would of their own accord exterminate themselves. And it seemed as though the renegade's

prognostication were to prove correct, for many of Sabbatai's intimates voluntarily went over to Islam. Without argument or hesitation they followed his example implicitly. It was not their business to ask the why and wherefore. The Messiah had his own good reasons which he would one day explain to them.

But the farther the news spread from headquarters, the greater was the scepticism and dislike with which it was received. It was surely merely a rumour circulated by enemies to cause a split in the movement! And people laughed superciliously and refused to believe. But further circumstantial reports left no room for doubt. And in the depths of their hearts they forthwith tried to discover the meaning of what had happened, with the result that they produced the fairest flower that can spring from earnest and willing souls—legend. In Leghorn it was declared that when Sabbatai Zevi put the turban on his head he placed it round a prince's crown. What had really happened therefore? Their Messiah had been crowned! And that was why the Sultan had straightway placed him at the head of a great army, which he would lead into Poland to avenge the martyrdom of hundreds of thousands of their co-religionists.

Some refused to believe this because they knew something else. It was not Sabbatai Zevi who had gone over to Islam, but his phantom which now haunted the apartments of the seraglio as the chamberlain Mehmed Effendi. Like the prophet Elijah, Sabbatai had been taken up into heaven and would return when God, in His own good time, released him for the performance of fresh miracles.

This comforting self-deception could not last. And soon every one knew the bitter and irrefutable fact that Sabbatai in the flesh, without any concealed prince's crown on his head, was an official in the seraglio, drawing a salary of fifty gold thalers a month, and apparently perfectly content with his existence, and only too pleased that his life had been spared. It now became clear that his followers were after all much greater than their leader. For they did not consider that there had been any break in the sacred continuity of the idea. How, without doing violence to their ideology and without any compulsion being brought to bear, did they succeed in adapting this disconcerting fact to their faith and the future course of the movement? From the Book of Esther they knew that a sojourn among those of alien faith might be a preliminary step to an act of salvation, for Esther gave herself up to a heathen king and lived in accordance with his customs. In the Kabala, too, it was written that Moses lived among the Ethiopians and practised their faith before he set his people free. Therefore, before he could carry out his work of salvation, it was incumbent on the Messiah, too, to spend some time among unbelievers. The prophets had certainly hinted that the Messiah would be numbered among the transgressors. Zechariah had prophesied that he would be poor and would ride upon an ass. This poverty, the lack of which Nehemia ha' Kohen had so bitterly deplored—thus argued the true believers—must be interpreted as poverty of spirit, temporary no doubt, of which the act of apostasy was the supreme expression. The Zohar also indicated that the Messiah would be mis-

judged but that, although he might appear to be evil, he would be sound at heart.

These attempts at accounting for or excusing what had happened grew ever more profound and spiritual and assumed forms which a Messiah might possibly have deserved, but this particular Messiah certainly did not. Their centuries of abysmal suffering had taught these people that all misery can be terminated only by its rising to unprecedented heights. If, therefore, the Messiah wished to take the suffering of the whole world on his own shoulders, he must bow down beneath it, deep down into the abyss, into the mire and swamp of unbelief. These were all preliminary steps to salvation. Abraham Michael Cardozo, a doctor and a Marrano, who had returned to Judaism, was a man who had juggled with his own soul, contrived his own ecstasies, and built up the weak and hesitating pronouncements of the Messiah into a complete doctrinal edifice, thus undermining the foundations of the Kabala. This redoubtable thinker discovered the conclusive reason, accepted by all believers, for Sabbatai's conversion. "It is the lot of every Redeemer to be misjudged and rejected," he declared. "Indeed it is the lot of each one of us in Galuth, for it is written: The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone (Deuteronomy xxviii, 36)."

Thus was the credulity of the masses bolstered up for awhile before it completely collapsed. For almost a year, things went on as usual, though there was great excitement far and wide. Even the following ninth of Ab, the great



SABETHA SEBI Iudeorum Rex, Smirnae in Asia natus aetatis 40.
 SABETHA SEBI Coninck der Iodegeboren te Smirna in Asia 40. ieren out.

Cornelis Meyssens sculpsit

Ioannes Meyssens excudit

SABBATAI ZEVI

day of mourning for the Jews, was celebrated almost everywhere as a day of rejoicing. In Adrianople the Rabbis actually had recourse to a ruse to prevent the seventeenth of Tammuz from being deprived of its significance as a fast day. They forged a circular letter in which Sabbatai was represented as confessing his repentance and assuring the faithful that he had been misled by Nathan Ghazati and Abraham Jachini. Nevertheless, a feeling of great spiritual tension was noticeable in all that was said and done at this time. Indeed it was so great that at any moment a collapse seemed inevitable which would leave the masses helpless and forlorn in face of an abysmal void. Even those who had been Sabbatai's opponents from the beginning could not help feeling the gravity of the situation. Everywhere communities were busy trying gradually and imperceptibly to return to former peaceful conditions. In Constantinople, near the heart of the trouble, the Rabbis issued a decree threatening with the most severe punishment—the great ban—any one who molested or threatened a former Sabbataian by word or deed, thus showing both respect and sympathy for a belief which they regarded as erroneous.

But there were many who scorned this kindness and sympathy. They had no need for pity, for no misfortune had overtaken them, and with unshaken determination they continued to pray as before in the synagogue. "He is the Messiah, and we expect no other." On the fifth of Shevat the Rabbis of Constantinople, who had recovered their former authority, were constrained to send a peremptory letter to Ismir, admonishing their colleagues there to maintain order. "For there are some among you who per-

sist in their error saying that our King still lives. On every Sabbath day they bless him in their synagogues and use the psalms and songs he prescribed. . . . But ye know full well in what jeopardy our souls were placed on his account. But for the infinite mercy of God and the virtue of our fathers, our enemies would have cut off the feet of Israel. . . . Turn back, therefore, we implore you, for the road into which ye have strayed is not the right road. Wherefore, we beg you, restore the crown to our ancient usages and to the customs of our fathers, and to the Law, and no longer turn your faces away from them!"

It was only gradually and with great reluctance that people responded to these appeals. They were more ready to abandon the outward and visible manifestations of Sabbataianism than its inward and spiritual significance. For apparently in the eyes of the unbelievers, at all events, Sabbatai Zevi was not the Messiah. The Sultan would therefore regard his aims as criminal and might hold them responsible. And thus fear once more entered their hearts.

Meanwhile, Sabbatai Zevi remained in the seraglio and held his peace. He did not come into contact with Jews; but although he was not cut off from the outside world, he was kept under observation. For, in spite of the fact that there was great rejoicing over this new recruit to Moham-medanism, he was not altogether trusted. The Sultan had charged the Mufti Wannî with the duty of watching over Mehmed Effendi and instructing him in the new faith. Thus Sabbatai went to school once more, and teacher and pupil began to learn from one another. These new studies, however, did not make him shut his ears to news that reached him from the outside world. True, his apostasy

was known far and wide and had been greeted either with exultation or with unshaken faith; but no one believed that here the matter would end. Everybody was awaiting further action on his part; his followers because they were hoping for a miracle and his opponents because they could hardly expect such a restless spirit to remain quiet for long.

But when nothing happened and it was discovered that Sabbatai was sitting at the feet of the Mufti Wannî and learning the Koran, the opposition became aggressive. Jacob Sasportas, in particular, began to bestir himself. His voluminous correspondence had brought him into touch with people all over the world, and he collected information from every quarter. He naturally emphasized everything unfavourable, and broadcast it far and wide, endeavouring to undermine the belief and confidence still felt in Sabbatai. There were many places in which weighty intellectual reasons were not required, for his arguments were supported by a gloomy but powerful ally—poverty. All over the world people had abandoned their ordinary way of life because they had been assured that it had all become worthless. They had sacrificed money and possessions to this conviction. Some had disposed of their businesses or given up trading; others had sold their houses and shared the money with the poor or sent it to Abydos. People were wandering about, desperate and at their wits' end for what to do or where to go. They had been left in the lurch and thrust back into a world of realities which they imagined had long ceased to exist. Thus to poverty and desolation was added the bitterness of disappointment.

On the other hand, there were those who, to the com-

plete exclusion of all else, had delivered themselves up body and soul to the idea. For them the events in the outside world had no real significance. The important matters of life were situated on another and higher plane. With unswerving loyalty and unshaken zeal they wandered far and wide preaching the gospel of Sabbatai, trying to win converts for a Messiah who had left the stage, and for a cause which had completely lost touch with the living world. They were met everywhere with increasing hostility; but it did not shake their faith. One of them, it is true, Sabbatai Raphael, appears to have degenerated in the course of his aimless and unhappy wanderings; for, meeting with no success, and finding himself unable to return to ordinary life, he was forced to become a swindler and charlatan. An apostle without a mission has nothing left to occupy him but his own resource in falsehood.

He pursued his activities as far as Hamburg, but found no one to listen to him. Among the records of the Portuguese community there is the following note: "In view of the menace to our peace, our Judaism, and our authority through the sojourn here of the rogue and swindler Raphael Sabatay, who has arrived from Amsterdam whence, since he assumed the title of prophet, he was banished through the action of the judicial authorities, we conferred together to discover how best we could prevent the said Sabatay from having any association with our people. . . . It did not seem practicable to pronounce a ban against him, for he is under the protection of the *Tedescos* (i. e., the German Jews), whom we should first have to consult. . . . May God preserve His people from evil!"

Nathan Ghazati, on the other hand, heroically played his part in the great tragedy to the end, and his almost superhuman determination bordered on madness. While the people in Ismir were proclaiming the Kingdom of Sabbatai with the wildest enthusiasm, while, in Abydos, Sabbatai Zevi was spending his short but glorious reign in ostentation and luxury, Nathan lived a secluded life at Gaza, surrounded by his disciples, from chosen members of whom he wished to form a body of prophets for the future. It did not require the captivating presence of the Messiah, or the magic power of his influence, for Nathan's overwrought and credulous imagination to indulge in further manifestoes and prophecies. He preferred the seclusion, the undisturbed secrecy, in which his visions and manifestations occurred.

Far removed as he was from the world of reality, the news of Sabbatai's apostasy took him totally by surprise and dumbfounded him. This was only for a moment, however, for his convictions quickly revived and became stronger than ever. To his mind, the movement was not dead, it had merely reached a critical point, when it needed his help, and he immediately set off for Adrianople, escorted by a splendid retinue. His rich father-in-law, who went with him, supplied him with a bodyguard of Jews and Turks, amounting in all to forty men. The prophet was mounted on horseback, and a sword hung at his side.

On the way he dispatched two letters, one to Sabbatai Zevi and the other to the community of Aleppo, which had been the first to celebrate the triumph of the Messiah. They were full of faith, stubborn and truculent belief, and consciously exaggerated humility, and constituted, as it were,

a passionate declaration of war on all opponents and doubters. To Sabbatai in Adrianople he wrote:

“To the King, our King and Lord of all Lords, who gathereth together the scattered tribes of Israel, and setteth us free from captivity, to the most high, to the Messiah of the God of Jacob, to the true Messiah, to the heavenly Lion, Sabbatai Zevi. Glory be to his name and may he soon be raised to rule over us for ever! Amen.

“In all humility I kiss the hands of the King of all Kings and wipe the dust from off his feet. This letter is to inform you that my face hath been illumined by the word of the King of Laws. . . . The unhappy news that hath but lately reached my ears hath not destroyed my courage. My heart is the heart of a lion. Far be it from me to ask the reason of what thou doest. All I see is wonderful. My loyalty is unshaken and I would sacrifice my soul for the sake of thy Holy Name. I am now in Damascus, whence, at thy command I shall go to Scanderoon, where I hope to see the face of God in all its glory. As the servant of thy servants, I shall wipe the dust from thy feet, and beg of thee to help me with thy right hand and thy superior might, and to shorten the road that lieth before me. I turn my eyes unto the Lord our God who will surely help and save us, so that the children of darkness can do us no harm. . . . These are the words of thy servant, who flingeth himself beneath thy feet. Nathan Benjamin.”

In the second letter he invoked the loyalty of the community of Aleppo:

“Eternal peace be unto you, O people of Israel. Herewith I inform you that I have reached Damascus in peace and shall now see the face of our Lord. He is the King

of all Kings, and may his kingdom grow day by day. In accordance with his command unto me and the twelve tribes, I have sought him out twelve men. At his behest I shall go hence to Scanderoon and with a few intimate friends, who by his consent are collected here, I will present myself to him. Meanwhile, let me adjure you, if you should hear strange things about our Lord, not to let your courage fail. Have no fear, for wondrous are his deeds and mysterious beyond the understanding of men. Who could fathom their depths? Soon shall ye see everything quite clearly. He himself shall reveal them to you and teach you and show you. Blessed is he who in patience can await salvation from the true Messiah. Soon shall the Messiah manifest his power over us now and to all eternity. Nathan Benjamin."

The news that the prophet was on the way to bear assistance to his Messiah kindled a great flame of hope in the hearts of all believers. Ismir stood on the tiptoe of expectation. Crowds flocked to the synagogue and held a thanksgiving service. But a dangerous counter-movement was soon inaugurated and Constantinople strained every nerve to undermine the prophet's influence. The leaders of it were not so much afraid of his preaching or his efforts at conversion as of a fresh crop of miracles that might result from a revival of faith. When they had been allowed to do so, and no one had dared to raise a hand forbidding the King of Abydos to work miracles, they, too, had eagerly believed and accepted them. But now any miraculous manifestations connected with the Mussulman chamberlain, Mehmed Effendi, were forbidden; they were ordinary misdemeanours, criminal acts. And they

wished to be left in peace at last. So they addressed the following note to Ismir: "We have just learnt that this man left Gaza a few days ago and is making his way to Scanderoon, whence he intends to go by sea to Ismir and thence without delay to Constantinople or Adrianople. But we are not a little astonished that a man should of his own free will fling himself into the fire and into the flames of destruction. Yet we are compelled to fear that this will be his lot. . . . Wherefore we the undersigned conjure you, as soon as he arrives in your district, to prevent him from continuing his journey and to urge him to return. For he will not fail to foment fresh disorders, of which sufficient have already been provoked by dreams and fantastic hopes of a new King. And we would also have you bear in mind that miracles do not happen every day. . . . And if he should refuse to listen to you and obey you, your laws are still powerful enough to force him to obedience. And this will conduce to the advantage both of Israel as a whole and of him in particular."

This letter appealed to the people chiefly because they were in urgent need of peace and tranquillity, although, if Sabbatai himself had been coming, they would have delivered themselves up to him once more. But as they heard nothing from him they refused to have his herald. And as Nathan continued on his way he was everywhere met by signs of opposition and even open hostility. He reached Salonica. But when the news of his arrival was made known, all the embittered and disappointed people whom he had advised to forget everyday concerns for the sake of eternity, began to crowd round him and his splendid bodyguard of forty men, declaring that he was re-

sponsible for their spiritual and material bankruptcy. He was obliged to flee by night and went to Brusa, the old capital. There the people believed that his coming merely meant that he was going to restore the Messiah to his mission, and they gave him an enthusiastic welcome. But news and warnings arrived from Constantinople and their disappointment and bitterness knew no bounds. They immediately forsook Nathan, forbidding any one to visit him, to offer him food, or to take him into their house. They even threatened to report him to the Turkish authorities, and he was obliged to leave the place. He had now had a foretaste of what awaited him, and probably saw that he could no longer come forward as he had done without aggravating the general discontent. He therefore disbanded his escort and kept only six men with him.

At the end of February 1667 he set off for Ismir, and stopped to rest in Bonar Baghi. As soon as his presence became known, friends of Sabbatai immediately went out to meet him and confer with him. The city also dispatched an official representative, Abraham Leon. The latter warned him about the temper of the inhabitants, and cautioned him against entering Ismir. He was also solicited by another strange deputation at Bonar Baghi. Representatives from the Italian community had just reached Ismir, long after Sabbatai's act of apostasy. They had set out with the intention of doing homage to the new Messiah, and now wished to obtain instructions from Nathan regarding the attitude they should adopt in the future. It was only on reaching Ismir that they learnt what had happened. The news had so shattered their spirit that for weeks they had remained in the city not

knowing what to do. At last they heard that Nathan was in the neighbourhood, and, as a forlorn hope, they set off in the direction of Bonar Baghi to solicit an audience of him. But, sad and disconsolate, he had shut himself up in one of the houses and refused to see or listen to any one. The deputies might wait or go away as they pleased. At last they went home and returned to Italy, the bearers of bad and depressing news. Later on Nathan constantly came across traces of them, and was made to feel the profound disappointment he had caused.

But for the moment he was helpless. The whole significance of his life was at stake. Whatever happened he must run all risks and go to Ismir, though he would enter more like a thief in the night than an official visitor. He arrived as dusk was falling and went to the house of a Sabbataian. His friends visited him there, and he did all in his power to strengthen their faith, but he was unable to extend his influence to a wider circle. The people crowded menacingly round him, urging him to depart, otherwise they would hand him over to the Turkish authorities. All they would allow him to do before his departure was to visit the grave of Sabbatai's mother. He laid his hand on it, said his prayers before it, and drank from the spring which gushed up close by and which the Christians called Sancta Veneranda. Then on the advice of his friends he went to Chios.

Here he wrote a letter of sympathy and comfort to Joseph Zevi. It was full of simple, profound loyalty and implicit faith, though an undertone of petulant fear may be detected in it. "I received your letter and gathered from it that you wished to know what had happened to

our Lord, on whom we are waiting, and whom we seek every day, every hour, and every minute, from whom we await the great Sabbath, for he is our holy Sabbath, the source of our knowledge and our holiness, the power of the highest crown. Wherefore I would have you know and I swear it by his holiness and by the greatness and strength of his power, that *he* is the Messiah and no other, and that there is no Saviour beside him. Even if he has set a turban on his head, he has not done it to desecrate the Name; for although I can find no reference to it in the texts of the Thora, we have surely often enough seen the strange things our wise men have done, and known that we could not understand their object. Once again we are confronted by the incomprehensible. But all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, and a heart to understand, must know who he is. And if they do not, then let their lips be for ever sealed that they may not speak evil of the Messiah and his holiness! For does not the Zohar say of the true prophet, that he would be sad and unrecognized, that he would be subjected to terrible suffering, and would seem to most men no more than a stinking dog? Those who do not recognize him are the evil ones, whose souls are confounded. And there are evil ones even among the *Zadikim*. Wherefore it is the miserly rich who are against him. He shall be poor, says the Zohar, and will ride upon an ass. Poor, here means of poor and blemished apparel, and the blemish is the turban. The words do not mean poor in money; for, after all, he came to make the world richer; but poor in the light of the Thora, poor in the light of its precepts. And it is also written: I will abide in God and he will redeem

our sins. He that hath a heart to understand will understand. And even if nothing can be proved, I shall not cease from comforting you in your concern about holy things. But God will care for you and for me, so that all poor Jews and beggars, who are now overcome by misery and anxiety, shall be blessed, and soon we shall see the joyful day when everything shall be fulfilled!"

Nathan did not remain long in Chios. He felt he must make another attempt at reaching Ismir, for it was of the utmost importance before he appeared at headquarters to fan the dying movement to flame from the rear. But meanwhile the attitude towards him had not improved. On this second visit he was able to stay only two days, hidden by friends of Sabbatai. He continued to assure them that before the end of the year, and the month of Elul, all his promises would be fulfilled. "If this does not turn out to be true, I shall deliver myself into your hands. Then you may kill me!" Before he departed he received a visit from Coenen the pastor, whose mind had never ceased to be preoccupied with the matter. He wished to have some explanation of the wonderful things he had seen happen under his own eyes, and therefore came to Nathan to find out from him on what he based his prophecies, how the spirit of prophecy had come upon him, and in view of the past what might be expected from his visions in future.

Nathan refused to discuss the matter, peevishly declaring that he had no mind to reply to the questions. His visitor was indignant, but he was wrong to be so. The two men did not understand one another, for they moved on different planes. Coenen was working at Church his-

tory. He was collecting facts. Nathan was working at history; he was collecting experiences; his mind was not free for theoretical discussions.

Meanwhile he had got into communication with Sabbatai and arranged to meet him at Ipsala near Adrianople. It is probable that this meeting actually took place, for we can refer Sabbatai's subsequent actions only to the impetus he received on again seeing the prophet who had played such a decisive part at the beginning of his career. But everything Nathan did was watched with suspicious attention by the Jewish world. They quite rightly felt that at this juncture the danger lay not in Sabbatai but in his resolute and determined prophet, whose position, far removed from practical life, made him fearless and irresponsible. But they had much to fear, both from within and without. The Sultan's intentions were still fresh in their minds, and the wounds of great and disappointed love in the body of the people had not yet healed. They needed peace and protection, as though they were recovering from an illness, and therefore tried to keep this fresh menace at arm's length. The community of Adrianople, therefore, informed the Rabbis in Constantinople of Nathan Ghazati's presence.

A deputation of Rabbis immediately set out for Ipsala, and forming a court there, summoned Nathan to appear before them. He obeyed and was informed that they were concerned not with Sabbatai Zevi and the Messiah, but with his own appearance there as a prophet. The prophets of old had facts and tradition on their side. But this new prophet, whom no one had appointed, and who imagined himself called upon to fill the office, should prove his

claims by a miracle, or, if for the moment he could not manage to perform a miracle, at least by means of theological arguments.

Nathan did not allow himself to be inveigled into a theological discussion, for he and his judges spoke different languages. Nevertheless, a miracle would happen, not on the spot, for he could not perform miracles, but it had been revealed to him that a miracle would take place that *Shabuoth*, the Feast of Weeks. So let them wait until the feast was over. And they waited, possibly firmly convinced that nothing would happen, or possibly in the vague expectation born of familiarity with miraculous occurrences.

When the Feast of Weeks went by and nothing happened, the Rabbis became insistent. They forced him to cease his activities, and he gave them the following undertaking: "In accordance with your demands and those of your representatives, I swear to enter into no correspondence with the Master whom you regard as a danger to Israel, and whom I and the faithful among the people glorify, to arrange no gatherings on his behalf, and to keep at a distance of at least twelve days' journey from Adrianople." After this act of renunciation, came his own justification. "Nevertheless, in the interest of truth I hereby declare that on the twenty-fifth of Elul 5425 (September 1665) I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me that within the space of one year and some months the kingdom of the Messiah ben David would be established, though I must add that the voice did not give me the Redeemer's name or any precise date." Then, in matter-of-fact phrases, though with secret mental reservations,

he gave expression for the last time to his stubborn adherence to his ideas. "It would therefore be right and proper to postpone the matter until the month of Elul of the current year, 5427 (September 1667), and only then to regard the heavenly voice as of no significance, provided, of course, no miracle should have occurred meanwhile."

The Rabbis shrugged their shoulders. All they asked was for the prophet to keep at a distance of twelve days' journey. But Nathan did not abide by his promise. The undertaking had been forced from him, therefore it was not binding. So he remained in the neighbourhood of Adrianople and secretly met both Sabbatai and his followers, and succeeded in fanning the movement to one last short flicker of life. And this he achieved in Adrianople itself through the influence he brought to bear on Sabbatai in the seraglio.

The power which had once been manifested in Sabbatai and had mastered him was not yet quite spent. True, its momentum had received a severe check; but, just as the blind man turns his face in the direction where he feels the sun is shining, so did Sabbatai retain a sense of the goal of all his efforts. He had been thrust into an obscurity where he could exercise no influence, and he yearned for the sun, which in his case was importance. But the union of deception and credulity, which had once produced a successful harmony, was now crippled by the impossible ambiguity of his position. He had broken down hopelessly at the moment when he had found a means of escape from a situation of mortal danger. True, he had tried to cover up the failure with the profound

conviction that the fresh turn in his fate was necessary and served a divine purpose. But those moments in his life, when he had failed to perceive the divine will and the necessary ruling of fate, when his desire to save his own skin had betrayed his mission, could not be obliterated. He was a branded man.

Therefore, everything he now did aimed at self-justification. Everything was valued in its relation to himself. Through the secret channels by which news reached him, he learnt that people were trying to plead for him, and defend him against a world of doubt and mockery, still believing in him and expecting miracles from him. So he was still a living force! He still had a mission in the world, and a justification for his actions! And as freedom was denied him, he began to conspire. He met Nathan. He secretly met his own people and assured them again and again that he was the Messiah and would save them.

They pointed to the leaden weights on his feet, the new strange creed! How could one so crippled rise up and save them? In trying to dispel these doubts he was guilty of pure megalomania, declaring that he must remain a member of this new faith because, through it, on the Day of Redemption, he would be able to lead the whole of the Mohammedan world over to Judaism. And they believed him! They believed! From the seeds of this small conspiracy another great popular movement was to spring. He needed an apostle. Nathan Ghazati offered his services. He was ready to exchange the contemplative life of his native land for an existence of wandering from town to town. And in the course of the year 1667 we actually

find him preaching and prophesying in Chios and Corfu. He consistently followed the routes most scantily served with news, and went to the Ionian Islands and thence to Venice, which had not yet resumed normal relations with Constantinople. He expected to receive considerable support from the Italian Kabalists. But he was strictly forbidden to enter the Ghetto. The community sent Samuel Aboab to meet him and advise him to take his departure. "I come in the name of God," replied Nathan proudly, "to take care of all Israel; no harm will befall any one!" When this declaration did not have the desired effect, he contrived with the help of a Sabbataian to get into touch with the Town Council, and prevailed upon them to allow him to stay.

The Jews were now compelled to allow him to enter the Ghetto. But, like the Rabbis of Constantinople, they immediately convened a court to pass judgment on him. Rabbis and representatives of communities from various parts of Italy met together, and though they did not demand miracles, they insisted on his offering some justification for his activities. He did his best to comply, for he had no wish to experience another disappointment over a miracle that failed to materialize. He told them of things he had seen, he argued and prophesied, he adduced proofs, and gave assurances, but only became hopelessly involved and confused. He stood alone, faced by a whole assembly bombarding him with questions, arguments and counter-arguments. They were not only clever, they also had a knowledge of human nature. After a long discussion they came to the conclusion that Nathan was suffering from an obsession. He had never had a revelation

from God; the divine voice had never addressed him. He had merely taken the distorted figments of his imagination and dreams as real. He was not a criminal but an invalid, and must not be punished with all the severity of the law for the trouble he had brought upon the Jewish people. But he must at least acknowledge what he had done. He must recant!

And thus Nathan came to sign the following statement: "When the Rabbis and *Geonim* of Venice declared as false and unproven my statement that, like the prophet Ezekiel, I had seen the heavenly chariot, as also my prophetic utterances that Sabbatai Zevi was the Messiah, I concurred with their view and declared that all my prophecies relating to Sabbatai Zevi were utterly devoid of foundation. I, Nathan Ghazati."

A large number of copies were made of this shameful confession, which, together with a report of events in Ipsala, were dispatched to all the leading communities of the world. But Nathan did not trouble his head about it. There was no need for him to do so. For by the way he had signed this recantation he had outwitted his stern judges. The word I, the Hebrew for which is *ani*, is usually abbreviated into the two letters a and n, *aleph* and *nun*. But Nathan had written *aleph-gimel*, which was equivalent to the abbreviation of the words *oness gamur*, meaning that the recantation had been extorted under pressure. He was therefore free to do as he chose. Moreover, his friends upheld him in this, saying that his recantation could refer only to outward and visible things, while his seer's vision gave him glimpses of the supernatural, which was the only reality.

He was forcibly turned out of Venice. He was removed in a ship to a southern port, in order that he might be taken in custody to Modena and on to Florence. But on landing, Nathan went his own way, spending some time in Bologna, Florence, and Leghorn. The people there, however, did not want him. He was wanted nowhere. Stubborn and unshaken in his faith in his mission he wandered from community to community, turning away from blocked streets and closed doors. At last he arrived in Rome and tried to preach, but he was driven out of the Ghetto because the inmates were afraid not only of him but also of the ever watchful and suspicious spies of the Inquisition. His departure from Rome was a flight with his pursuers hot on his heels. But he succeeded in crossing the Tiber and from the bridge flung a piece of paper into the river on which was written the prophetic warning: "Before a year has elapsed Rome will be destroyed!"

He wandered on and on growing more and more weary. But he never lost heart. Dragging himself from place to place, visiting the communities of Turkey, he passed through Ragusa and Salonica. At last he settled in Sofia, in order to be as near as possible when the great miracles happened. There he remained and waited, faithful to his Messiah up to the time of his death in poverty and misery in 1680. Thus did the slave of his faith, this all-too-ardent fanatic, die for his beliefs in his thirty-fifth year. Even in his last moments he did not give up. "I will go to my master, for he knows the way," he said on his death-bed.

Meanwhile, Sabbatai also had resumed his activities.

This new Mohammedan succeeded in evading the strict supervision of the Mufti Wanni, and secretly at first, but in the end quite openly, began to appear in the synagogues. He was both insistent and engaging. All he cared about was that people should acknowledge him as the Messiah. He struggled to win souls, and he succeeded. The end was everything, the means did not matter!

Thus, when the Sultan learnt of these secret activities, Sabbatai had no difficulty in appeasing his wrath. What wrong was he doing? He was only trying to convert as many Jews as possible to Islam! And the Sultan came to the conclusion that the former Jewish Messiah was eminently qualified to make such proselytes, and consequently gave him official permission to enter the synagogues and preach.

Sabbatai made full use of this authorization, and as soon as he felt the first breath of freedom, he returned with renewed vigour to his old life. In March 1668 his pent-up vitality burst forth in a series of exuberant prophetic utterances. He had had another revelation from God, which had confirmed him in the belief that, even in this period of apparent unbelief, he remained the true and chosen Messiah. He made this proclamation with such force and emphasis that even unbelievers listened and wavered, and in the end a fresh movement was inaugurated in his favour. These people were accustomed to disappointment, but were mercifully endowed with a faith that disappointment could not kill. His followers proceeded to publish manifestoes, which bore a suspicious resemblance to a new Sabbataian theology. The Kabala declared that there were emanations from God, *Sephiroth*,

which became incorporated in the world. One of these, the *Sephira Tipheret*, the first emanation, had passed into Sabbatai Zevi, and become incarnate in him. God himself had withdrawn to the remoter regions of inaccessible space. But he had left mankind his Messiah.

This idea also, which was certainly not the creation of his own brain, Sabbatai passionately adopted. Standing in the pulpits of the synagogues, surrounded by his followers, he proclaimed: "God is a youth and is like unto me!"

The Sultan was at a loss to understand his game. His suspicions were once more aroused, and he would have liked to put an end to Sabbatai's public activities. But the latter succeeded in averting even this danger by promising that he would soon be able to show proof of the success of his efforts. Indeed, he was actually able to do so. For, making a virtue of necessity, he called upon his adherents to follow his example and go over to Islam, only in pretence, of course, and threatened not to lead them to Jerusalem if they failed to do so. He has also been charged with having borne false witness against rebellious spirits by accusing them of slandering Islam, and then saving them from the death sentence which the crime involved by having them converted. Be this as it may, a split occurred in the movement, which was already doomed. One side believed in him, though they refused to be converted to Islam, regarding such a step as exceptional and right only in the case of the Messiah; the other, with whom the former would have nothing to do, continuing to follow him unquestioningly.

Thus Sabbatai was able to show the Sultan the specta-

cle of hundreds of Jews putting on the turban under his very eyes. It was a great triumph for him. While in the communities of Holland and Germany fugitives from Spain and Portugal, who had spent their lives as Marranos or sham-Christians under the heel of the Inquisition, were being driven by the irresistible impulses of hereditary ardour back to Judaism, Sabbatai, with the object of fulfilling his Messianic mission, was leading the Jews into an alien faith and thus creating fresh Marranos. Thus he prolonged this most complicated religious problem indefinitely. To this day his followers are still to be found in the sect known as the *Dönmehs*, Mohammedans with vague, mystical and hazy recollections of Judaism.

Gradually Sabbatai succeeded in consolidating his position with regard to the Jews and the Sultan. But he was anxious to carry on his activities away from the constant supervision to which he was subjected. He therefore asked permission to be allowed to go to Constantinople to widen his sphere of activity; and in view of the successes he had already achieved his request was granted. He was jubilant! He was free, the world lay open before him, and he had ample scope for action and the exercise of his imagination.

He met with a friendly reception from the Jews of Constantinople. They had not forgotten the brilliant days of Abydos. Although those days had not produced any decisive or tangible results, they remained a unique and glorious memory in their faithful hearts. Even as a memory the wild frenzy of their love had power to warm their hearts and to keep some remnants of hope alive, which now began to stir in their breasts. Why should this not

be a fresh beginning? Surely it was a miracle that Sabbatai should be so highly honoured by his natural foe, the Sultan, and treated with such consideration! Must not the finger of God be in it after all?

In any case, Sabbatai himself was ready to regard it as a fresh start. As if nothing had happened, nothing changed, he took up his position in Constantinople and let the faithful come to him. He spoke to them, taught them, prophesied to them; he sang Messianic hymns to them and shared in the joyous festivals they prepared for him. Once again the ninth of Ab became a day of rejoicing. Once again, as at first, processions followed him through the streets to the beach, where in full view of his disciples and supporters he plunged into the sea—a Messiah, preparing himself for the great day as if nothing had happened meanwhile, no check or disaster!

Those who had been his enemies from the beginning watched this new development with dismay and, presenting themselves before the Grand Vizier in Adrianople, reported what was happening. Köprili had also heard of the affair through his agents; but although he was far from pleased, he was as reluctant as ever to take any drastic steps against Sabbatai. But he did at least decide to put a stop to the monthly salary which Sabbatai drew as Mehmed Effendi. This he did partly by way of punishment and partly to prevent him from giving feasts and banquets and alms to his poorer followers. He wished to avoid the Sultan's money being spent in winning fresh adherents for Sabbatai. But this loss of income did not perturb Sabbatai, for he obtained more than enough money from his followers. And they multiplied their

feasts and festivals. Were they not celebrating a fresh beginning? But Sabbatai's opponents also redoubled their efforts, and it cost them a small fortune to convince the Grand Vizier that there was only one way of securing peace not only for the Sultan but also for the Jews, and that was the complete separation of the Messiah from his followers. They are said to have backed their arguments with 15,000 Dutch guilders.

Köprili hesitated. In the end he was obliged to admit that there was no other solution. The business, in which both sides were playing a surreptitious game, involving dirty little hole-and-corner conspiracies, had now lasted five years. So one night when Sabbatai was at the little village of Courron Chesme on the Bosphorus, singing psalms and hymns with his followers for the coming of the Messiah, some of the Kaimakam's troops appeared and arrested him. The Grand Vizier had given orders for him to be banished to Dulcigno, a remote village on the coast of Albania in the neighbourhood of Scutari (1673).

This brought his life to a close. He was strictly watched. Only a few people were allowed access to him. Occasionally he received a letter from Nathan Ghazati or Primo. Otherwise he was alone in the company of his fifth wife, whom he had married in Adrianople after Sarah's death. He was situated miles away from any frequented highroad. This meant death to him. To exercise influence, to be a Messiah, nay even to keep alive, he needed people, faces, response, constant confirmatory acclamation, unlimited sustenance for his self-importance. Deprived of these stimulants, he was bound to perish. Thus in that solitude which always tends to strengthen

and mature really virile religious spirits did Sabbatai end his days in failure and complete collapse, once and for all dealing the death blow to any claims he may have had to being the Messiah.

He had alternate moods of the most profound spiritual depression and of the most overweening self-exaltation. Writing to his father-in-law, Joseph Philosoph in Salonica, he told him that they would still live to see the Day of Redemption and the return of the Jews to Zion. "I shall send you an angel. I shall come and fill your treasure chests; for God hath appointed me Lord of all Mizrayim."

It was the helpless stuttering of a broken man. He eagerly devoured the reports occasionally sent by faithful friends telling him that there were still people who wove legends round his name. But they were paltry, insignificant inventions. It was said, for instance, that, when the Turks tried to kill him, and fell upon him with drawn swords, he put them all to flight with a small stick—a flimsy tale to be told of a man whom at one time many hundreds of thousands had acclaimed with joy as the fulfiller of their destiny.

Solitude choked him, and he withered like an uprooted plant. He survived for two long years. Then in the autumn of 1675, after a short illness, he succumbed.

On his death-bed he expressed one last wish, he begged that he might not be buried in the Mohammedan cemetery. If he was not to be allowed to rest with his own folk, he wished to lie where people had so often gazed at him with blissful awe and expectation, when he was performing the symbolic act of purification from all sin, on the sea-shore,

on the edge of the boundless space out of which he had emerged as a youth and into which he wished to return in death.

His wish was granted. At Yomkippur, 1675, he was buried, on the Great Day of Atonement, the day on which God threw open man's book of life and read the good and evil therein set down—read and yet forgave.

His grave was forgotten. Only at rare intervals did Mohammedans make a pilgrimage to it to pray. They said it was the grave of a saint.

As soon as his death was known legends sprang up thick and fast. The people had been too devoted to him, too much of their heart's blood had gone out to him, for them to believe that he was dead. Like the prophet Elijah, who had foretold his coming, he had merely been removed to another sphere. Indeed—so believers affirmed—he had predicted the very day of his death. He had indicated the cave in which he wished to be buried, and had commanded his brother Elijah to go there three days after his burial. And Elijah went. But in front of the cave lay a great dragon, who barred the way to him. "My brother commanded me to come," said Elijah. Whereupon the dragon let him pass. Elijah entered the cave. It was empty but filled by a glowing light. And then the people knew that Sabbatai had crossed the Sabbath to the ten lost tribes. They had long known what was happening there. So the Messiah still lived. He would come back. "And if all goes well he will come soon, seven days after his marriage, to redeem us. God grant he tarries not too long, until misfortune overtakes us! May he come to wreak vengeance on our enemies and slanderers!"

So, as the Messiah still lived, they made preparations for the day of his return. As the King was only temporarily absent a regency must be established. Sabbatai had no heir in the flesh, but his last wife had a brother, Jacob Keredo, who was a minor. And she declared that Sabbatai had appeared to her from the beyond and had adopted the boy as his son. On the basis of this declaration, the Sabbataians acknowledged him as Gilgul, the man into whom Sabbatai's soul had entered, his spiritual double. And they called him Jacob Zevi. In many places, particularly in such important cities as Salonica, Ismir, Adrianople, and Constantinople, bands of convinced Sabbataians still existed, thenceforward ruled by an institution which might be called a regency, consisting of Jacob Zevi's father and sister. The idea of redemption, as they understood it, still survived among them and sought new forms of expression. They knew that redemption could come only in an Age of complete righteousness, or else in one plunged and submerged in suffering and corruption. And while it was beyond them to attain the state of complete righteousness, they were at least able to fill the cup of life to the brim with sin, with the object of hastening the Day of Redemption. Thus they made a necessity of sin, and sought it in the form in which it had hitherto been most strictly forbidden—sensuality. So heedlessly did they indulge in dissipation, that at last the Rabbis denounced them to the authorities.

They began to be persecuted by the Turks, and most of those who escaped succeeded in doing so only by going over to Islam, thus following Sabbatai's example and excusing their behaviour as he had done. They became a sect

apart and finally left the Jewish fraternity. Their regent, Jacob Zevi, made a pilgrimage to Mohammed's tomb at Mecca, and died on the return journey. His son Berachiah was made regent in his stead. The conventicles can be traced down to the middle of the eighteenth century, and as far afield as Frankfort and Prague. And the Dönmehs exist to this day.

Such was the legacy Sabbatai Zevi left behind him—two sects, one lost to Judaism, the other a nation scattered over the face of the earth, a sad and disappointed people, poverty-stricken and uprooted. He had deprived them of all they possessed except hope and the power of self-analysis. And they immediately began to inquire whether they themselves had not been to blame. Perhaps they had not performed sufficient penitential exercises! That must be it! And they blamed themselves. They had undertaken only a reconciliation of man with God and had forgotten the reconciliation of man with man!

To put the matter right and prevent the stream of their religious life from being choked, they humbly, hopefully and mournfully resumed their everyday existence. A sad lament has come down to us, entered by the Portuguese community in Hamburg in their minutes. It constitutes a mournful reflection on the immediate past: "The regular succour now given to the poor has attained fabulous proportions; it is all due to the expectations cherished on the most flimsy grounds by the gentlemen composing the former governing body, that in their own day our wanderings and exile would come to an end. But both are likely to continue on account of our sins, until God takes pity on His people."

But later on those who were still smarting under the blow and could not regard the matter so calmly never mentioned the name of Sabbatai without adding: *Yimach shemo!* Cursed be his name!

CHAPTER XIV

The Meaning of the Episode

THIS book has hitherto been confined to a strict statement of fact, but the place has now come for appraisal and judgment, an ineluctable task if the book is to justify itself for having called the attention of contemporaries to this slice of the past.

A historical episode has been presented, the fundamental problems of which have from time immemorial demanded a solution mankind has hitherto failed to supply. But the fact that an Age concerns itself at all therewith is in itself a sign of that Age's fertility.

In every Age, and now more than ever before, certain men come forward claiming to be leaders, chosen to exercise power, to play a prominent part, and to possess spiritual mastery. We do not refer to those whose professional activities debar them from devoting themselves to a vocation. Such men do not survive the memory and fashion of a period. We refer to men like Sabbatai Zevi, who ruthlessly strive towards a goal and the realization of an idea, but who fail notwithstanding and leave behind them nothing but a state of chaos, and the curses of those who come after. Where, in such cases, are we to look for the flaw in the link between will and success, between vocation and result?

To aim at being a successful technician, inventor, or political economist is a very different matter from endeavouring to mould the destiny of living men. The two aims are subject to a different law, though both are pursued with the object of obtaining results. By this is meant the popular idea of causing things to happen. Experience has taught that there is a certain relation between cause and effect which we term causality. And obtaining results on the one plane means that a man has assumed the part of cause in a known connexion between cause and effect, in the hope of effecting something. And he may succeed. But the man who tries to obtain results on the other plane may find himself confronted by insuperable obstacles. For in his case, cause and effect, or this causality, do not operate. Causality is merely a hypothesis, which helps us to generalize about one of the necessary factors of practical and productive life, or by means of which, solely for purposes of convenience, we clarify our minds regarding the relations of existing things. But in matters of life and destiny, in essential reality, there is no such connexion between cause and effect. All we see is a sequence of events, the connexion between which it is impossible to grasp. All we know is that there is a sequence of events which are in some way connected. And the man who on this plane says, I shall make myself the cause, I shall place myself in the centre of things, and shall will a certain result, remains merely a technician. In essential reality no man can be the cause of an effect. All he can do is to connect himself by his activities with something that has not yet happened. He may not wish as a personality, or as a phenomenon, to produce effects in a personality or a phenomenon. He

must enter into the essence of life, of existence, of phenomena, and try to affect them by acting as what he really is (although his real self may be something he does not and cannot grasp) upon what is. He must stake his whole being unreservedly. He must with his whole body and soul enter into the relation in which he intends through truth to work his effect. He must address life with the whole power of his personality. Otherwise he will get no response. Otherwise no effective relation will be achieved, and no result.

It was as the result of such an unconditional surrender of self that art came into being thousands of years ago. No desire to influence men directed the hand of the Egyptian sculptor. He merely wished to get at the heart of life. When he attacked a wall of rock and carved out of it a king on his throne, the figure sat there like no other sitter, for he was not placed there for the sculptor's day alone but for centuries to come. The artist did not carve a portrait. He did not regard himself as the cause of an effect. He conjured the soul of him whom he wished to reproduce and with whom he had spiritual communion into the stone and gave him the power to endure. It was his faith that was creative, not his will to produce an effect.

But even more critical and responsible is the position of one who seeks to obtain a relationship to an Age, like the Sabbataian Age, which is stretching out its hands in mute entreaty for a helper and healer! In such an Age one man becomes a physician in the technical sense, and the other a physician by virtue of his humanity. The one tries to effect a cure by isolating, understanding, and attacking

the illness, by prescribing and applying remedies, and by working as a man of special qualifications upon the body of the sick person. But as a helper he does not touch the masses in need of assistance. And he would never be able to feel or acknowledge that, when a sick man approaches him asking to be healed, they are both of them at once sick man and healer, no longer subject and object, no longer a person acting and a person being acted upon. They are placed in an alliance with life and existence, and with the origin of life. He who wishes to effect anything there must deal with the source of suffering which is common to them both. He must appeal to the source of life and ally himself with that form with which the whole process started.

Regarded from this standpoint, Sabbatai Zevi was neither an effective force nor a healer. What had he staked upon his desire to be an effective force? Did he really stake his own person, his nature, his whole being? No! All he did was to stake the power of his will to importance. And from this finite power he demanded a finite result.

It was this that was his undoing. It is impossible on this plane of life for a man to haggle as to what part of his existence he will sacrifice. If he wishes to be an effective force in any Age, he addresses the world with his whole being, or else holds his peace. Echo is not an answer. Echo is the return of a man's voice to himself, the reply to the ambitious spirit whose will is involved in his effort to be effective. But true effectiveness is achieved by a cessation of the will to be effective, by the control of that which is usually called will. Will cannot prevail over life. That is why when life is at stake, no ex-

ercise of will is tolerated. The will should be part of the sacrifice. For there should be no will as such outside the act of true sacrifice.

Sabbatai Zevi was never a man who was bound to mankind from the depths of his heart. Even when a whole world was on its knees before him, he was still a solitary being, standing before a thousand faces as before a mirror, in which he saw himself reflected a thousandfold. But when a solitary man stands confronted by life, he can lay hold of it only by some form of exorcism. And as an exorcist, he is bound to be haunted all his life by the fear that one day the spirits will no longer obey him.

In order constantly to confirm himself in his calling, Sabbatai had always associated himself with the prophets. He could recite their words, but he could not understand them. He had no idea what they meant by raising such an outcry against the cult of sacrifices. They were not opposed to sacrifice as a sacramental rite. But they insisted on this physical act of sacrifice involving the surrender of the man himself, and in its not being an empty formality, a mere act of exorcism and magic. For to withhold oneself, to try to save the price, and only to exorcize, is the religious man's crime. That was why, in the hands of a magician, religion could become a dangerous power. Nothing can so disfigure God's countenance as religion.

Sabbatai Zevi had called himself a king, and wished to be a king. He did not understand the spirit that had first led to the institution of kings among his own people. There had been a time when there were no kings in Israel and the government had been a sort of theocracy under the rule of God. Whenever it was necessary for some par-

ticular task to be carried out, a judge was appointed for this special purpose only. When he had accomplished his mission, he sank back into insignificance. But the people made a failure of theocracy. They wanted earthly, bodily kings. And their wish was granted. The nomination of a king was always a call, an election, accompanied by the sacramental rite of anointing. This anointing signified that the power which had elected them and made them its repository was given effect and durability, just as the mission which they took over with their kingship was not limited to a particular space of time but was supposed to be lasting. Anointing did not merely mean that a new power was being added to those a man already possessed. It was supposed to lift him above the petty concerns which had hitherto preoccupied him. It was supposed to overthrow him, remake him, renovate him, and force him to start life afresh. He was born again that he might achieve greater things *media in vita*.

But Sabbatai Zevi never changed. The quinquagenarian who died in exile in Dulcigno was the same man as the Chacham of eighteen. There is nothing in his nature or his actions to show that he ever heard the great call which brings a decisive change into a man's life. He was not one of the elect. He was a man who, out of burning love of himself, and possibly out of a burning love of his people, *wished* to be one of the elect. But this cannot be achieved by an effort of will. There must be a call. And for a man to decide whether he has or has not been called, the most careful, humble, and selfless listening is necessary. To wish to be called, though he is not called, makes a man a great charlatan, even if he believes in himself.

But Sabbatai never listened. He was always urging on fulfilment and rushing more than half way to meet it. It is then that demand meets failure, just as the liar and the poet, the false and true creator meet. They meet at a point which evades rational demonstration, which can only be felt—at the point of Truth, which constitutes the call.

And it was here that the twofold drama began—Sabbatai's tragedy and his responsibility.

Every untruth becomes for him who has once subjected himself to it a constraint from which there is no escape, which forces his nature to become other than it is, that is to say, to consist of a reality, his own reality, which he lives, and of a truth in which he believes. Thus Sabbatai suddenly appeared before the world as the profound believer in his own falsehood. At the bar of his own conscience, which at the critical moment was not awake, he could vindicate his position. Everything good that happened to him was just and right, and everything bad was wrong and unjust. And when eternal justice punished him, he felt entitled to raise his hands reproachfully to heaven.

But the tragedy of his position in no way diminished the weight of responsibility he had shouldered. By this we do not mean his religious responsibility but the responsibility towards his people. Whereas to all appearance the people's call and the reply of him they called, actually met, an abysmal gulf of misunderstanding really separated the two. What did these people want? They yearned for another reality. They wanted to start a new relation to their lives and to their God. The endless blows and buffetings of fate had at last taught them that their

position in the world and their attitude towards life were not determined by their own arbitrary choice, but were subject to a higher law from which there was no escape. And they interpreted this law in different ways, according to whether they regarded their salvation from the mystical or the political point of view. But on one point they were all agreed—that in the beginning God had called them to be a peculiar people. He had never ceased to do so. He was still there silently waiting for their response. They had so often gone astray, that at last they had found a way; they had so often failed to respond, that at last the response had been born of suffering. From the religious point of view, they had fallen away from God; from the sociological point of view they had perished as a living community.

For their return to their former unity they were seeking a leader. And lo! an abyss of misunderstanding suddenly yawned before them, just as a similar abyss yawns before us today. They cried out for a leader, and they were offered a representative. But they did not want a representative. Their dispersion in scattered fragments was representative enough of their fate and of their need of salvation. Those who seek a leader come forward laden with trustfulness, and would fain lay the responsibility for the rest of the journey in the hands of that leader, who should not be one of themselves, but should march ahead into the unknown, into the twilight of the future, to meet the things which can loom into sight only at his approach. The people came to him as once another people had come to *Œdipus*, trustfully imploring him to rid their city of a plague. And the true leader will and indeed must act

through the very power conferred upon him by the multitude. He must allow it to permeate him, and act effectively through it. But if he uses the power that flows to him only to confirm his estimate of himself, to make himself the centre of everything, and to mould his own destiny, then the hand of death is laid upon his leadership through his abuse of confidence, and the responsibility entrusted to him by those who believe in him becomes a multiple debt he can never hope to pay. The fact that he never gave a thought to all this makes Sabbatai Zevi in the highest degree culpable. The people longed for salvation. He gave them a promise. The people yearned for something real. He gave them a grandiose display. He did not grasp the fundamental fact that a whole world wished to become reconciled with its God and its own existence. All he knew was that he must be the Messiah. He acted as modern men do in whatever they undertake—he emulated a historical form of leadership without any adequate spiritual equipment. He practised mimicry. The force which today deserves the name of leader in its special and profoundest sense is anonymous. It has no name and no continuity.

The Sabbataian movement, up to the time of the collapse of the Messiah, cannot be explained, as historians maintain, as a phenomenon of religious scholarship or a phenomenon arising out of sociological conditions. It was simply a phenomenon of the heart, viewed from the standpoint of the individual and of the community, an affair which might be possible anywhere, in any religion, and any community, now or a thousand years ago, either in an acute or a latent form, tumultuous or buried beneath

the surface of everyday life. It was only the peculiar conditions under which the Jews were living that gave it the strength to become serious. It was like a crusade without arms, hatred, or aggression, its only weapon being the human heart—and it was unsuccessful! But it was not the people who failed. It was their leader.

When a man is not fit to be a leader, it is obvious that he can offer no solution, and can leave no effective ideal behind him. It is not within the province of this work to describe the edifice of religious doctrine which is associated with the name and activities of Sabbatai Zevi. Whatever it was, it did not originate with him. His successors used him merely as a dangerous foundation stone. And the Jewish people as a whole never accepted the doctrine. They buried their hopes; now and again they experienced a faint revival of them; but as the years went by they turned ever more and more to the things of this world. But the heritage of their race and ancestry, the idea of redemption, has lived on, as it were subterraneously. In Hassidism it experienced a short but glorious period of efflorescence, while gleams of it may be seen in the idea of social justice, in so far as it has been advanced by Jews, despite all the confusion of theory and dogma. In Zionism, which was an attempt at a partial solution on the plane of reality, it met with defeat. And, at the present day, a new experience and a new interpretation of life are germinating in the hearts of individuals scattered all over the world, but linked together by knowledge and all manner of premonitions. This is roughly what Martin Buber once told his friends during a few unforgettable and inspiring hours on a hill near Ponte Tresa:

"Just as, in truth, every man can live only by the reality of practical conditions, and can frame his life only in accordance with them; just as a man's whole personal life, his effectiveness, his productivity, his discovery of himself, and his path from birth to death, are in some way connected with the reality from which he sprang—so must he retain the perspective of reality, and remember always that it is human life as a whole, not merely his human life. That which he stands upon also bears others here and everywhere in the form of another relation. In ultimate analysis, therefore, it is not a matter of degrees of truth, a matter of being true or less true, but of the difference between the practical relations of men to the one and only truth, which can be possessed by no man as such. This difference constitutes the pre-Messianic history of the human race. The Messianic world means the overcoming of the multiplicity of practical relations, the unfolding of the one truth, which apportions itself to man in the form of his multifarious, fragmentary, but nevertheless practical relations. Messianism is not a conception limited to Christianity and Judaism. Every real human life yearns for salvation. The forms of salvation are as different as the forms of men, of peoples, of communities, and above all, of religions. Even the multiplicity of religions, of conceptions, of practical relations, is a way, a necessary way. It is the way leading to unity, to salvation, through all the contradictions and conflicts, and through the very abyss itself."

Thus these things which seem so remote from our everyday life nevertheless find their way back into our reality. One has only to rid the concepts of their narrow

dogmatic associations, and to restore them as what they are to their place in life—that is, components of our moral existence, no less important or effective than all the psychological components of life, of which every one is aware, and which every one often uses lovingly for sketching and explaining his own personality. But man lives much more deeply according to the law of credulity and incredulity, according to the value of good and evil, according to the experience of sin and requital, and according to the experience of emancipation and captivity, than he lives according to the law of Love, which long ago sank back again into the obscurity of dogma.

THE END

LIST OF KINGS

Isaac Silveira	King David
Abraham Jachini	King Solomon
Solomon Lagnado	Jehoahaz
Joseph Cohen	Uzziah
Moses Galante	Jehoshaphat
Daniel Pinto	Hizkiah
Abraham Scandala	Jotham
Mokia Caspar	Zedekiah
Abraham Leon	Ahaz
Ephraim Arditi	Jehoram
Solomon Carmona	Ahab
Mattathah Ashkenazi (Bloch)	Asa
Mëir Alcaire	Rehoboam
Jacob Loxas	Ammon
Mordecai Jessurun	Jehoiakim
Joseph Karillo	Abijah
Conorte Nehemias	Zerubbabel
Joseph Caire (Chelebi)	Joash
Eliakim Khaver	Amazia
Abraham Rubio	Josiah
Chaim Pegna	Jeroboam
Joseph Pernick	Sabbatai's Viceroy
Elijah Zevi	King of the King of Kings
Joseph Zevi	King of Kings in Judah
Elijah Azar	Sabbatai's Viceroy

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